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FANNY;

OR,

THE DESERTED DAUGHTER.

A NOVEL.

BEING THE FIRST LITERARY ATTEMPT OF

A YOUNG LADY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1792.

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FANNY;

OR,

THE DESERTED DAUGHTER.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

A PINDARIC

POETICAL DEDICATION,

TO

THE HONOURABLE MISS S——

BY

HER MOST DEVOTED,

UNKNOWN,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHORESS.

TO

THE HONOURABLE MISS S——

MADAM,

IF you expect to find this Dedication
A tedious, formal, flattering, quaint oration,
Fill'd from one end to t'other with your praiſes,
While the tir'd reader like a ſtuck pig gazes,
I fear me you'll be ſtrangely diſappointed;
I'd not ſit down to praiſe the Lord's anointed.
The lyre of flattery in theſe days of wonder,
Can ne'er be heard, unleſs it roars like thunder;
And modern bards have ſo o'erdone the thing,
I'm quite afraid that they have crack'd the ſtring.

Yet prithee, Madam, don't miſtake me quite,
To do you juſtice my poor wits are bent all,
For you can teach fine ladies to unite
The uſeful talents with the ornamental.

Tho' in fine arts you've ſuch ſuperior ſkill,
Tho' you can draw and paint with ſo much taſte,
You don't diſdain your mother earth to till,
To ſtitch a wriſtband, or to make puff-paſte.

Lord,

Lord, what an excellent good wife you'd make!
To one who had, or not, the gifts of Mammon,
For you can ſpin, and ſew, and cook, and bake,
Dreſs, talk, play whiſt, cheſs, cribbage, or back-gammon.

Tho' in theſe arts you well can paſs the hour,
And gaily bid the paſſing moments fly,
Yet you poſſeſs the dearer, happier power,
To ſoothe the ſorrowing ſoul with ſympathy.

But lud! don't let me thus grow ſentimental,
That is'nt at all the ſtyle that I intended,
A few light verſes here are ornamental,
And to write fine, God knows, I ne'er pretended.

If e'er your eyes ſhould in theſe pages ſtray,
As ten to one ſome leiſure hour they may,
Will you not wonder to be thus addreſs'd,
By one to whom you are a total ſtranger?
But let not anger fire Miſs S——'s breaſt,
In ſuch addreſſes there can be no danger.

What can the creature mean, methinks you ſay,
To dignify ſuch nonſenſe with my name?
Yet read, dear creature, through the book I pray,
And tell me then if I'm ſo much to blame.

You love to cheriſh the afflicted heart,
Then prithee take poor Fanny Vincent's part;
If you'll but prove a Lady Suſan to her,
In vain ſhall critics labour to undo her;
Proud of your countenance ſhe'll ſtand up boldly,
And take all carping criticiſms coldly.

In vain ſome wits ſhall cry, Lard, what a crater!
Why I declare ſhe's loſt her reputation,
Well, 'tis beyond all probable good-nature,
To take her part againſt all folks of faſhion.

Yet ſee the downcaſt victim of the world,
See her to infamy's deep dungeon hurl'd;
Pity the ſwelling tear, the burſting ſigh,
The conſcious innocence that gilds her eye;
Reſcue from calumny her injur'd name,
And by your goodneſs raiſe the maid to fame.

PREFACE.

IN this age of Novels, to presume to draw the public attention to one, out of so many which are daily published, is perhaps a degree of vanity unpardonable even in an author; a race of beings who seem to enjoy, by prescriptive right, more claim to vanity than any other class of mortals. You beauties, who in all the gorgeous trappings of dress, claim the eye of admiration, and the whisper of applause; you beaux, who exhibit your cropt heads, and short sticks in the playhouse lobbies; you

phyſicians, who utter profound and unintelligible harangues to the wondering patient; in ſhort, all you mortals who claim, in any way, the ſlighteſt pre-eminence over any of your fellow-beings, (and where is the mortal ſo low, who finds not ſome peculiarity whereon to ground ſelf-approbation) what are your pretenſions to vanity, compared to thoſe of an author? A being, who by a few ſtrokes with a pen, can fill up the vacant hour, can raiſe the ſmile, or promote the tear, through diſtant climes and periods, calls the world to judge of the production of leiſure, and gather a knot of critics round the amuſement of an hour. The author looks on his book, the creation of his brain, the creature he has called out of nothing, the chaos to which

which he has given birth; happy the writer, who, with a ſmile, can pronounce it good.

To arrive at pre-eminence is far beyond my hopes; to eſcape blame, as much below them; I wiſh not to be known, but I wiſh Fanny Vincent to be liked. I feel like a mother, who, introducing her daughter to a crowded aſſembly, is content to be unnoticed herſelf, while ſhe pants for the favourable reception of her child. Wrapt up in ſecrecy, I ſhould be pleaſed to hear, "I wonder who wrote Fanny!" It is a queſtion I never mean to anſwer, as I write not for fame but pleaſure; yet were I conſcious of a ſingle line in this performance, inimical to the intereſts of virtue, I would burn the

book

book rather than present it to the Public, though I were sure of being celebrated as the first novel-writer of the age.

But far humbler is my ambition; I wrote this tale to please a few friends, this object answered, they wished me to enlarge the pleasure they thought it capable of communicating. If the world receives it favourably, my hopes are answered; if it condemns my production, I will write no more.

NORFOLK.

FANNY;

OR,

THE DESERTED DAUGHTER.

CHAP. I.

SIR John Sinclair was a wealthy baronet in the north of England. He had married, when very young, the daughter of an ancient and illuſtrious family, deſcended, in the female line from regal anceſtors; and Lady Eleanor inherited, with all the beauty, the haughty and uncontrolable ſpirit of her progenitors.

The depredations of time cauſe ſo many changes, that we need not ſeek otherwiſe to account for the penury of Lady Eleanor's father, who could ſcarce leave a ſufficient income to his heir to ſupport the nobility of his houſe; and the daughters were obliged to ſeek, in affluent marriages, what the extravagance or hoſpitality of their anceſtors had deprived them of. Yet the native pride of Lady Eleanor made her ill brook that want of riches, which had driven her to take a commoner to her arms.

She lived for many years with Sir John, without any inheritors of her beauty or her pride; when, at a period totally unexpected, after an union of near twelve years, ſhe became pregnant.—Sir John, delighted with the proſpect of an heir to his eſtates, which muſt otherwiſe go to a branch of his family

he

he had been very little connected with, knew not how to contain his joy; while Lady Eleanor hoped for a ſon, in whom the nobility of his mother would prevail over the plebeian turn of his father.—Her plan however was diſappointed; for at the appointed time Lady Eleanor gave birth to a daughter.

To this daughter ſhe gave the name of Auguſta; and though ſhe ſaw in the infant the traces of that beauty which dignified herſelf, yet ſo much did ſhe feel the diſappointment of her hopes, that ſhe never beheld her without a pang. Time, however, paſſed away, and Auguſta had now reached her third year, when a woman of the name of Vincent came to ſettle in the village.

Mrs. Vincent, though poor, was diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the cottagers

by an air of mildneſs and melancholy, which is ſeldom found among mere ruſtics. There was a ſomething in her manners which beſpoke her ſuperior to her neighbours; but ſhe was yet more diſtinguiſhed from them by the beauty and elegance of the little Fanny.

Fanny was now eighteen months old. She ſhewed already her grace, her wit, and her ſenſibility. Lady Eleanor was ſtruck with the child, and with the mother. She converſed frequently with Mrs. Vincent, and was one day cloſeted with her for two hours. At the expiration of that time Mrs. Vincent went home, and ſoon returned with the little Fanny. A thouſand times ſhe embraced and bleſſed her darling; at length ſhe put her into the arms of Lady Eleanor, and took her leave. Mrs. Vincent immediately quitted the village, and Lady

Eleanor

Eleanor associated the beautiful Fanny with her daughter Augusta.

Another year elapsed, and Lady Eleanor found herself once more with child. New hopes rekindled in her bosom; and at length she was gratified by becoming the mother of a boy.

Her noble relations were convened to the christening, and her son received the names of Fitzroy Scroop Augustus, after his sponsors. An elegant entertainment was provided, and Lady Eleanor was all vivacity, when suddenly the nurse called her from the table, and she found the child of her hopes in dreadful convulsions, which, in a few minutes, put an end to his life. When she beheld him dead and stiff, she fell into the most violent agonies of rage and despair. The paroxysms of her fury were too

much for her enfeebled frame, and a malignant fever enſued, which carried her off in four-and-twenty hours.

The violence of Lady Eleanor's ſpirit had, in a degree, curbed in the waywardneſs of Sir John's diſpoſition, and he felt himſelf as much inclined to rejoice as to weep, at the loſs of a wife who had kept him in a ſtate of ſubjection. He now gave the reins to his inclination; and, providing a governeſs for the two girls, to whom he committed the entire management of them, he allotted to their uſe one wing of the manſion-houſe, and devoted the reſt of the building to the friends and companions of his debaucheries. Wine, gaming, hunting, and women, by turns governed his ſoul; and, as he had no ſettled principles to controul his paſſions, he gave a looſe to every predominant de-

fire;—and was by turns the prey of gamblers, parasites, and harlots. Women, were, however, his prevailing passion, and his house was perpetually filled with a tribe of loose, disorderly females, who excluded all better company, and fixed a stigma on Sinclair-house, from which however he was often absent for months together.

The governess provided for Augusta and Fanny, was a woman of a character too common in her station. Skilled in the low cunning of the world, she treated Miss Sinclair with the profoundest respect, fostering in her young mind all the pride and passions for which her mother had been so eminently distinguished.

As for poor Fanny, whose name of Vincent was forgotten by the whole house, (for Lady Eleanor's servants had

been all changed too frequently for any to remember it) she was subjected to all the indignities which poverty and dependence never fail to meet with from the illiberal pride of common minds.—Her beauty, her graces, her understanding, eminent above her years and her sex, availed her nothing with Mrs. Bruton; and if she improved her natural talents, it was not owing to the instructions of her tutoress, but to that native elegance of mind which led her to the pursuit of knowledge and refinement.

As Augusta advanced in age, she began to imitate Mrs. Bruton in her treatment of Fanny; and the affection natural from a child to her companion, was repressed by the instructions of her governess, and the native haughtiness of her heart. Frequently would she call Fanny by the grossest and most insulting appel-

lations, reproach her with the favours she received, and think herself entitled to exact from the poor girl the most humiliating services.

Though a woman was appointed to wait upon them both, Miss Sinclair would suffer nobody to do her errands, and perform the office of her servant but Fanny, towards whom she never thought it necessary to smooth her ill temper under the mask of civility. When this custom was once established, she began to feel it a degradation that Fanny should eat at her table; and, by degrees, drove her to the table of her waiting woman.

The unfortunate child bore this treatment with a meekness and resignation which Miss Sinclair and Mrs. Bruton attributed to the servility natural to such grovelling beings; and Mrs. Bruton

even aſſerted, that it was evident enough Fanny was born to a ſtate of ſlavery.—"Her mind," ſhe ſaid, "raiſed her no higher;—ſhe had no independence in her ſpirit;—while no one could ever imagine Miſs Sinclair born but to command.

Theſe principles accorded too well with Auguſta's diſpoſition for her not to adopt them implicitly. She took every opportunity of ſhewing the nobility of her ſoul, by her arrogant manner of delivering her orders, and by never receding from a point once demanded.—The conceſſions ſhe too eaſily obtained from Mrs. Bruton taught her always to expect the ſame unbounded complaiſance, and her ſpirit became obſtinate, and unable to bear contradiction.—She had long thought the confinement they were kept in odious;—but her

father's

father's orders were ſo peremptory that ſhe hitherto obeyed, though with reluctance; but when ſhe had attained the age of fifteen, ſhe determined to obey no longer.

Among other modes of cultivating the mind of her pupil, (for Fanny had long been diſregarded) Mrs. Bruton had not neglected the reading of all the new novels;—and Miſs Sinclair's head was full of heroines of fifteen, who, by their beauty, gave laws to a croud of adorers. This was preciſely the ſituation ſhe panted for. Her glaſs and her governeſs both told her ſhe was beautiful; and her heart informed her ſhe was capable of giving laws. She was indeed uncommonly beautiful. Her ſtature was tall and large;—ſhe had wonderful dignity in her manner, and her commanding eyes were full of fire; her

complexion was eminently fair; and her high arched nose, and dark blue eyes, gave her an expression too often wanting to a fair skin. Her father, who, though he seldom saw his daughter, willingly contributed to her expences, had furnished her with a variety of cloaths becoming her age and station, which she wore with the air of a queen.

Her birth-day arrived. She was fifteen years old. She dressed herself in her best habiliments, — and, hearing from the servants that her father was alone in the saloon, she desired to be conducted to him. The fellow hesitated and stared.—She repeated her words.—The man stammered out something about his master's orders.—"You do well," said she, "to respect your master's orders; now learn to obey your mistress." The fellow, confounded, led

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the way with deference, and throwing open the door of the ſaloon announced to her aſtoniſhed father the entrance of Miſs Sinclair.

Miſs Sinclair advanced with all the dignity of her mother, and Sir John thought he beheld Lady Eleanor when fate firſt gave her to him. He roſe from his ſeat, and led his daughter to a chair.—Several months had elapſed ſince he had ſeen her, and he was aſtoniſhed at her dignity and beauty.

She ſat for ſome minutes ſilent, Sir John ſtanding by and looking at her.—At length he approached her, and ſaid, "Welcome, my daughter to your father's houſe;—henceforth be it's miſtreſs."—"She intended it" ſhe ſaid, "on ſome conditions." He demanded

to

to know them. She replied, "That his company ſhould be fit for her to aſſociate with. Sir John, ever doomed to be ſubject to a ſuperior ſpirit, promiſed compliance, and they remained the beſt friends imaginable.

Mrs. Bruton, from the governeſs, became the humble companion of Miſs Sinclair; and the lovely Fanny was fixed in the degrading ſituation of her waiting-woman. Auguſta ſoon obtained the abſolute rule of her father's mind. She moulded him to her will,—nay, to her caprice, in every inſtance; and as her power was unbounded, ſhe ſought, in every object, every poſſible pleaſure and enjoyment. She formed acquaintances with the numerous families round, and had the ſatisfaction to find that her beauty attracted univerſal homage.

She

She had now enjoyed this felicity, ſo ſuitable to her diſpoſition, for above a twelvemonth, when one morning her father entered her dreſſing-room, as Fanny was arranging her hair. Sir John had not ſeen the fair attendant of his daughter ſince her lovely form was ripening into womanhood; and was inſtantly ſtruck with the peculiar elegance of her figure.

Fanny, now near fifteen, was uncommonly tall; but her form was ſo graceful, ſo pliant, and ſo ſlender, that ſhe never gave you the idea of extraordinary height;—the ſhortneſs of her waiſt, and elegant length of her limbs, gave her the appearance of the beautiful bending figures of the Grecian ſchool. Her hands and arms were white, and delicately turned. A profuſion of pale brown hair fell about her lovely boſom,

yet

yet only ſhaded by a high tucker; and her throat was of an admirable whiteneſs and ſymmetry. Her face was beautiful; yet ſo beyond all beauty of feature was the mind that animated that ſweet countenance, that the eye which beheld Fanny, never remarked the regularity of her face, but, enchanted with the lovely whole, ſought in vain to dwell on each ſeparate perfection. Her countenance, ever varying with the impreſſion of the moment, was never three minutes the ſame, ſave in the expreſſion of ſweetneſs and modeſty. The lively and touching graces, a ſoft, and melting languor, an eaſy gaiety, ſucceeded by turns, and Sir John Sinclair, long accuſtomed to give way to his feelings for the ſex, in which he was eſteemed a connoiſſeur, beheld the fair form of Fanny with an admiration he could not conceal. "Is, this," cried he, "yes, it muſt be Fanny!"

Fanny bluſhed and curtſied, and was about to leave the room.—"Where are you going, child?" ſaid Auguſta harſhly. "Pray ſtay and finiſh my hair."—"Why does not your woman pin up your hair?" ſaid Sir John.—"My woman!" repeated Miſs Sinclair. "Why what is Fanny?"—"Fanny," reſumed Sir John, "was not deſtined for that purpoſe, nor ſhall ſhe be degraded to it. I know not how it has eſcaped me ſo long, but Fanny, Miſs Sinclair, is your companion, and as ſuch, I expect for the future ſhe ſhould be introduced."—"That is an expectation," reſumed Auguſta ſharply, "which, I will venture to ſay, will be diſappointed. What, pray, entitles her to be the companion of the grand-daughter of the houſe of Fitzroy?"—"As for that, Auguſta," replied the Baronet, "it is a point we will not diſcuſs at preſent. We diſtreſs

the poor child; let us argue no more, but prepare to obey me."—"Diſtreſs her indeed!" repeated Miſs Sinclair; "ſhe is vaſtly to be pitied! Perhaps ſhe is mortified by your notice, Sir; or humbled to think that a beggar's brat is raiſed to the office of my woman; let her not imagine, that from my woman ſhe ſhall ever become my aſſociate."

Sir John, hurt in the point where he leaſt could bear contradiction, an infant paſſion, became yet more warm. With a few oaths he told his daughter he would be obeyed; and, taking Fanny's hand, he ſaid, "Be not uneaſy, my lovely charge, you ſhall find that I will not be all my life under petticoat government. Many years I was controled by her mother, and now the arrogant daughter preſumes to aſſume the reins. But weep not, fair Fanny, you ſhall be

in

in ſpite of her pride, the companion of Miſs Sinclair."

"Oh, Sir!" ſobbed out the weeping girl, "I beſeech you draw me not from the humble ſtation I was born to, where I may paſs unnoticed, and my defects unperceived."—"Commend me to your modeſty," reſumed the inſulting Miſs Sinclair, "have you art enough to lay traps for compliments?"

"Auguſta," ſaid Sir John ſternly, "I command you to be ſilent, or to ſpeak more graciouſly. No, my ſweet girl," purſued he, turning to Fanny, with a ſoftened voice and look, "you were born to grace the higheſt ſtation, and the beſt lady in the land might be proud to be your aſſociate."—"Born to grace the higheſt ſtation!" repeated Miſs Sinclair ſarcaſtically; "Perhaps, then, like

the

the Fitzroys, my noble anceſtors; this ſweet girl is deſcended from a regal ſtock. Shame on your auguſt relations that they do not come to claim their dependant couſin, and raiſe her to the honours ſhe was born to grace."——"Shame, rather, on your inhuman heart, Auguſta Sinclair," replied Sir John, "which can thus delight to wound a boſom replete with ſenſibility like this."

Poor Fanny had made ſeveral attempts to eſcape; but Sir John ſtill held her hand, and detained her near him. She was ſobbing violently, and, throwing herſelf on her knees before Sir John, "I beſeech you, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "permit me to retire. I thank you for your intended goodneſs to me, but I am unworthy of it; and I entreat you to forget that a being like me could occaſion an altercation between Miſs Sinclair

clair and her honoured parent." She roſe, and, almoſt fainting, would have left the room; but Sir John roſe alſo, and, placing her in an eaſy chair, deſired her to compoſe her ſpirits; and ordered his daughter to attend him to his library.

Miſs Sinclair replied, "That he might ſay what he pleaſed to her, the preſence of Fanny need be no conſtraint. She was not aſhamed of herſelf, nor could he make her ſo." Then turning quickly round, and fixing her eyes on Fanny, "When you are recovered," ſaid ſhe, ſcornfully, "come and finiſh my hair." "I tell you, Auguſta," ſaid Sir John, in a loud voice, "ſhe ſhall not do it. She was not born for it."—"No, indeed," replied the inſolent Auguſta, "ſhe was not born to ſo high an office; but it is my whim to raiſe her to it, and

I will

I will gratify it."—"Child, child," cried the enraged parent, "where didſt thou learn this ſpirit?"—"From a proper ſenſe of what is due to myſelf," anſwered quickly the haughty daughter."—"I tell you," ſaid Sir John, "that though there is ſome myſtery in Fanny's birth, yet ſhe is perhaps your equal; it is plain your mother thought ſo, by chooſing her for your companion, and placing her on an equality with you."—"My mother might, for once, be miſtaken," ſaid Auguſta, "Fanny's grovelling ſpirit ſhews her born for dependence."—"Folly," ſaid Sir John, "look at that form, that face, the mind expreſſed in that lovely face, and ſay, if you dare, ſhe was not born your equal, your ſuperior."—"You will ruin the girl by your flattery, Sir," ſaid Auguſta; "ſuch palaver is only fit for the women who uſed to be your companions.

Go child," ſaid ſhe to Fanny, "leave my room; and, do you hear, let not your head be turned by what you have heard, and fancy yourſelf a perſon of mighty conſequence."

"Auguſta," ſaid Sir John, riſing, and with a voice and countenance uncommonly diſordered, "Auguſta, on your duty I charge you, hear and obey me Inſtantly receive this lovely girl for your companion, your friend; introduce her with you into all companies; let her be dreſſed in equal elegance with yourſelf, or from this moment I renounce you as my daughter, cut you off from my affection, and, from what you value more, the indulgencies and luxuries you have hitherto enjoyed. — Not a word," ſaid he, obſerving ſhe was preparing to anſwer; "I will let you know I will be maſter here. And you, lovely

ly Fanny, come with me; I will not leave you ſubject to my daughter's inſolence."

Fanny roſe from her ſeat, and, once more throwing herſelf on her knees, in the moſt affecting voice beſought Sir John to relinquiſh his project, as ſhe felt herſelf unfit to ſuſtain the part he propoſed for her; then, turning to Miſs Sinclair, ſhe added, "And you, Madam, pardon me the uneaſineſs I have been the unfortunate cauſe of; and ſuffer me to remove from your ſight the object of your diſpleaſure."—"Child," ſaid Miſs Sinclair, —"I never once thought enough about you to make you the object of my diſpleaſure; but, ſuch as you are, I chuſe to have you about me."

"And is your heart ſo hard, Auguſta?" cried Sir John, "I ſuffered

this

this humiliation only to see how much you could bear; and now hear my will. Rise Fanny, and prepare, both of you, to obey me. Miss Sinclair never more sees company without this lovely girl by her side; and if Miss Sinclair chuses to absent herself, Fanny takes her place as mistress of the house. I hear not another word," added he, seeing Augusta about to reply; and, taking Fanny by the hand, he led her out of the room.

The obsequious Mrs. Bruton now entered; she saw the lowering cloud upon Miss Sinclair's brow, and having heard it briefly accounted for, said, "And what do you resolve on?"—"To let my father do as he pleases with his mushroom favourite of an hour, and to seclude myself from all society but your's."

"The resolution is noble, and worthy of you," replied Mrs. Bruton, "and I should support you in it, if another mode of acting did not offer a more exquisite revenge."—"How is that?" said Augusta, sullenly.—"By frequenting all society, and being still yourself;" answered the friendly monitress. "You will then have a thousand opportunities of shewing your superiority, and mortifying this little upstart, and her capricious protector."—"True, Bruton," replied Miss Sinclair, with a malicious joy; "I believe you are right. We have company this very day; call the woman and let me be dressed."

Let us leave Miss Sinclair at her toilette, full of the most amiable dispositions, to follow Sir John and the trembling Fanny. He led her to a noble and elegant apartment, which he told her

her ſhe ſhould henceforth occupy; and obſerving her downcaſt looks, endeavoured to comfort her with a hundred compliments, intermixed with ſome careſſes, which emboldened the innocent Fanny to look up to him as a father.—Sir John obſerved her increaſing confidence, and, with the moſt ſoothing voice and manner, charged her to apply to him in all her little wants, and to hold herſelf dependant on no one but himſelf. "Then," ſaid he, "my fair Fanny," gently drawing her on his knee as he ſpoke, "then I truſt you will never feel an uncomfortable moment.—Tell me, ſweet girl," added he, kiſſing a tear from her cheek, "will you not try to be happy?"

"Oh, Sir," replied ſhe, "your goodneſs would indeed make me ſo; but how can I be happy under Miſs Sin-

clair's diſpleaſure?"—"Violent ſpirits like her's, my love," replied Sir John, "always bend in time; not indeed at the moment when acquieſcence would be a grace, but they never fail to do it at laſt; but I go and leave you to prepare for dinner. Remember we have company, and I will not excuſe you."

Fanny, heſitating, begged to be permitted to abſent herſelf to-day; but Sir John replied, "No, my love; if we yield this firſt day to Auguſta, ſhe will always expect it. Your dreſs will do for any company; for, with your form and face, no one conſiders apparel."

Fanny bluſhed as Sir John kiſſed her fair hand; he now roſe, and left the innocent girl in an anxious ſtate of mind between hope and fear, expecting ſhe knew not what of pleaſure from her introduction

troduction to theſe novel ſcenes, and dreading the ſarcaſtic tyranny of Miſs Sinclair. Hope, however, overcame in part her depreſſion; for at her happy age the ſpirits, light and elaſtic, reſiſt the preſſure of uncertain evils, but dwell with confidence on future pleaſures; and ſhe adjuſted her ſimple dreſs in the beſt manner ſhe was able. Flowers, feathers, and gaudy trimmings, the ornaments of Miſs Sinclair, ſhe poſſeſſed not; but confining her ſhining ringlets with a pale blue ribbon, a clean white gown compleated her toilette.

Sir John, when he left his fair *protegée*, called his ſervants together, and told them his will with regard to Fanny.—As he was a maſter who inſiſted on implicit obedience, they received his commands with outward reſpect, though they laughed together when out of ſight.

But Fanny's ſweetneſs ſoon conciliated their real eſteem. Sir John himſelf felt a ſort of hope ſpringing in his heart which he yet ſcarce dared avow even to himſelf. It is certain that the beautiful form of Fanny had awakened all thoſe warm ſentiments he had ever been accuſtomed to feel for her ſex; and he was not of a temper eaſily to abandon ſuch a hope. Obſtacles ſeemed only to inflame his paſſion, and the apparent innocence, and unſuſpicious confidence of its fair object was eminently calculated to encreaſe his deſires. He determined therefore to purſue his object with a caution which ſhould leave no room for alarm; and he, who, like the Sultan of the Eaſt, had hitherto been accuſtomed to the eaſy ſmiles of venal beauty, promiſed himſelf pleaſures of an higher ſort, from the unpractiſed heart of his innocent victim. He knew from

experience,

experience, that poſſeſſion beſtows leſs real happineſs than purſuit; and he determined to make his delicate purſuit a long ſource of indeſcribable delight.—These proſpects employed his mind till his expected gueſts arrived, and the ſervant announced dinner.

Miſs Sinclair was already known to the gueſts; but Sir John himſelf was up ſtairs, and, taking the hand of the innocent Fanny, preſented her to each of his gueſts in a particular manner.—Her beauty and elegance attracted univerſal notice, and univerſal admiration, and when Miſs Sinclair entered the room, followed by the civil Mrs. Bruton, ſhe ſhuddered with vexation, to ſee Fanny already received.

Miſs Sinclair had that day put on all her charms, for the purpoſe of captivat-

ing a young nobleman, who was to pay his firſt viſit there, and for whom her father had ſecretly deſtined her hand, though he had not yet informed her of his will, well aware that his avowing the deſign would have ſet her obſtinate mind againſt it; he therefore only told her, that Lord de Grey, eldeſt ſon to the Earl of Calſhot, would that day accompany his family; but he came not; the Earl and Counteſs were only attended by their two daughters, Lady Suſan and Lady Sophia de Gray.

Lady Sophia, the youngeſt, was about twenty-two; extremely pretty, and extremely faſhionable; very conſcious of her charms, and exacting a ſort of adulation to them:—rather affected and coquettiſh, but ſo good-humoured at bottom, that her faults did not diſguſt. She was not, however, very diſcerning, and

had

had already made a great friendſhip with Auguſta Sinclair.

Lady Suſan, the elder ſiſter, was about five-and-twenty ; not remarkably handſome, but her countenance was intelligent and full of ſenſibility;—her underſtanding was cultivated, and her manners intereſting. She ſeemed in a moment charmed with the native graces of Fanny, and placed her next herſelf at dinner.

The Earl and Counteſs were only diſtinguiſhed by their pride of rank from the multitude. They were proud of Lady Sophia, and of their ſon, of whom they ſpoke in very high terms, but ſeemed to care very little about Lady Suſan.

The reſt of the company conſiſted of Sir Harry and Lady Dunbar ;— the

gentleman a country ſquire, and the lady a country coquette; Mr. Farland, a young man of great eſtate, who was paying his devoirs to Miſs Sinclair; and Mr. Cecil, a gentleman of fortune, already arrived at a certain age, without a wife. This gentleman was ſeated on the other ſide of Fanny; he ſeemed to prefer the converſation of Lady Suſan to any one preſent; and they talked ſo agreeably that Fanny was too much intereſted to attend to the angry countenance of Miſs Sinclair.

When dinner was over, and the ladies retired, Miſs Sinclair, unmindful of Lady Calſhot, addreſſed the chief of her converſation to Lady Sophia;—Lady Suſan and her young friend placed themſelves near the Counteſs, who would not however condeſcend to ſpeak to them, but entered into a frivolous diſ-

courſe

courſe with Lady Dunbar; and Lady Suſan and Fanny ſoon became well acquainted, and really attached to each other. A friend like Lady Sulan was the greateſt bleſſing poor Fanny could have received, and her young heart gave itſelf up without reſerve to the delights of a new and firſt friendſhip.

The manners of Lady Suſan were ſo gentle, and ſo conciliating, that Fanny thought not of the diſtance between their rank, but behaved with an eaſy confidence, which charmed her ſenſible friend.—Her penetration ſoon diſcovered the *deſagremens* of Fanny's ſituation; ſhe ſaw her expreſſive features full of conſtraint when Miſs Sinclair ſpoke to her, though ſhe addreſſed her with more than uſual good-humour; for Mrs. Bruton had perſuaded her to aſſume an air of mildneſs at firſt, that

ſhe might gain the more unlimited power.

Theſe three tête-à-têtes were at length interrupted by the entrance of the gentlemen. — Young Farland, who was pleaſed with the pretty face, and gay coquetry of Lady Sophia, placed himſelf between her and Auguſta on a ſopha, and divided his gallantry ſo equally that Miſs Sinclair felt herſelf offended, and began to be angry with her two pretty friends.

Mr. Cecil joined Lady Suſan and Fanny; and, after tea, propoſed a walk. Thoſe of the company who choſe to ſtay within, amuſed themſelves at cards; and the four young ladies, attended by Farland and Cecil, ſallied forth among the woods.

Mr. Farland, who knew that Lady Sophia had no fortune, ſoon perceived the *faux pas* had been guilty of; and as he was really in love with Miſs Sinclair's guineas, and thought her extremely beautiful, he ſoon contrived, with ſome tender trifles, to bring her into good humour again. Lady Sophia, who was only pleaſed when ſhe was flattered, began to gape when Farland addreſſed all his attention to Miſs Sinclair, and joined her ſiſter's party.

"What!" ſaid Mr. Cecil, "has Venus left her gay ſociety to join ſo ſerious a party as Minerva's?"—"You can be gay enough," when you pleaſe, Mr. Cecil;" replied Lady Sophia.—"How is it poſſible to be gay," ſaid Cecil, "when charms like your's

"Transfix the heart with many an aching pang."

"Oh,"

"Oh," ſaid the pleaſed Sophia, "I thought your heart had defied all charms."—"Impoſſible!" ſaid Cecil gravely; "you never thought ſo humbly of your attractions; if you imagined there was a heart in the world that could defy them, you would turn Roman Catholic, and ſhut yourſelf up in a cloiſter."

"Oh, horrid!" exclaimed Lady Sophia; "no, that I would not. What! take vows which are never to be broken!"—"Nay," replied Cecil with a ſmile, "though you are no Roman Catholic, I believe that is your firm intention."—"No, never, indeed;" ſaid Lady Sophia.—"Indeed!" ſaid Cecil. "Have you then doomed all your admirers to ſigh in vain? or do you think more lightly of the marriage-vow?"—"I proteſt that never entered my head," ſaid

faid ſhe ; " but it is not ſo ſolemn as the vow of a nun."—" But equally binding, is it not, Lady Suſan?" aſked Cecil. " Certainly ;" ſaid Lady Suſan, " and I wonder how my ſiſter, who never holds in the ſame mind two minutes together, can think of taking any vows at all."—" Oh," replied Lady Sophia, " The marriage chain is gilt, and bound round with flowers."—" But not the leſs a chain, ſiſter."

" Well," ſaid Sophia, " if you think it alarming," dear Suſan, " reſolve againſt it;—for my part, I make no reſolution one way or the other."—" Nor " Lady Suſan, I hope," ſaid Cecil.—" I do not know," anſwered Lady Suſan ; " if I were to reſolve it would certainly be againſt marriage."—" I would not care," replied Cecil eagerly, " if women in general ſaid ſo."—" Oh then," interrupted

interrupted Lady Sophia, "you care more particularly for my ſiſter."—Cecil bluſhed, but recovering himſelf continued,—"For women in general act in direct contradiction to their profeſſions, but Lady Suſan does not ſpeak without reflecting, nor reſolve without deliberating."—"And therefore," reſumed the gay Lady Sophia, "her reſolutions are more to be truſted, and this would chagrin our inſenſible philoſopher. Ah, Suſan, what a triumph!"—Suſan coloured in her turn, but replied, laughing, "Ah, Sophia, what a madcap!"

Cecil now, to divert the attention of the lively Sophia from himſelf and Lady Suſan, which he began to feel irkſome, turned to Fanny, who had hitherto been ſilent, and ſaid, "And what thinks our young friend here of this important buſineſs?—What are her reſolutions with reſpect

reſpect to love and marriage?"—"I know nothing of either yet," replied Fanny. "But hope in due time to underſtand both as well as any one," continued Cecil for her. Fanny bluſhed. "Come, come," ſaid Lady Suſan, "the leſſon is eaſily taught."—"When one finds an apt maſter, Suſan," replied Sophia.

They now approached the houſe, and entering the drawing room, found the whiſt-party juſt broke up, and Cecil, placing a chair at the harpſichord, led Miſs Sinclair to it. She played, and ſung a very fine Italian air, which Farland praiſed with affected tranſport.—Lady Suſan now was entreated to take the chair, and, after ſome heſitation, ſung a little pathetic air with infinite expreſſion. Cecil encored it, and ſhe timidly obeyed; but ſung it infinitely

better

better than before. Cecil ſaid very little, but that little ſhewed how much he was affected.

Sir John Sinclair, who knew that he had paid a muſic-maſter for Fanny, now deſired her to perform.— "Lord, Sir," burſt out Auguſta, "ſhe can't play." Sir John gave her a look, and Mrs. Bruton whiſpered ſomething in her ear which ſilenced her;—but her quick ſpeech had not eſcaped the obſervation of Lady Suſan, nor of Mr. Cecil. They both, with ſignificant looks at each other, joined their entreaties to Fanny to comply with Sir John's requeſt.— Poor Fanny intimidated, bluſhed, and begged to be excuſed. This, to thoſe who had remarked Miſs Sinclair's look and manner, only confirmed their opinion that Fanny far ſurpaſſed her haughty companion in her talent for muſic.

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This might probably be the caſe, but, whatever her talents might be, they had long loſt all advantage of cultivation; for Miſs Sinclair thought ſuch accompliſhments out of character for Fanny's line of life, and had forbid all practice. Fanny conſoled herſelf that books were not yet denied her, and quitting entirely muſic and drawing, which ſhe had hardly begun, ſtrove to cultivate her mind, and endeavoured to be amiable without thoſe more brilliant accompliſhments. She therefore replied to the redoubled entreaties of the company, that ſhe really could not play;—that finding in herſelf no peculiar talent for muſic, ſhe had long been induced to give it up.

From politeneſs, Miſs Sinclair was again applied to. She reſumed the place at the harpſichord, and continued for

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the remainder of the evening playing and finging, without remarking that the performance rather fatigued than amuſed her audience, who were however profuſe in their applauſe; a circumſtance highly gratifying to the vanity of Miſs Sinclair.

At length the hour of parting arrived, the carriages were announced, and the company took their leave. Fanny ſaw them going with concern, and felt happy when Sir John ſaid to Mr. Cecil, "You have a good way to go, Cecil, will you take a bed here?" Cecil thanked him, and accepted the offer, which rejoiced the heart of Fanny, who trembled at being left again to Miſs Sinclair, who was not at all with-held by her father's preſence from her arrogant and mortifying conduct. She forgot that it was only putting off the evil day, and chatted with ſome degree of freedom to

her

her new friend at ſupper, who had placed himſelf next her, leaving Mrs. Bruton alone on the oppoſite ſide.

Cecil was a man of about forty;—not handſome, but his countenance was ſo ſenſible, ſo animated, that it was not poſſible to remember his want of beauty. he had, indeed, good eyes and good teeth. He had a great deal of penetration, and having been very intimate in the family, without having ever ſeen Fanny, he concluded there was ſome myſtery in her introduction. He read diſcontent plainly enough in the looks of Miſs Sinclair, and admiration in Sir John's. He knew the character of the maſter well enough to ſuſpect his deſigns on Fanny; and ſeeing her unſuſpecting heart the ſeat of innocence itſelf, determined to become her friend, and do all

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in his power to ward off her impending fate.

The hour of repoſe arrived. The ladies retired.; and, as Mrs. Bruton ſhut the dining-room door, the heart of Fanny ſunk within her. She followed Miſs Sinclair to her dreſſing-room, and offered to come in and help her; but Miſs Sinclair formally refuſed; and, dropping a low curtſy, wiſhed her a good night

Fanny felt the ridicule of this over-ſtrained reſpect, and, with her eyes full of tears, retired.—She now knew not where to go,—Sir John had informed her her old bed would that very night be occupied by a ſervant, and ſhe dared not go into the apartment he had ſhewn her. It was immediately over the di-

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ning room, and Sir John, who was anxiouſly watching for her entrance, not hearing her ſtep over head, made an excuſe to Cecil, and ran up ſtairs.

He found Fanny in the gallery, her eyes full of tears.—He took her hand in ſilence, and led her into the apartment he had deſtined for her. Gently wiping the tears from her eyes, he kiſſed her glowing cheek, and, ſeating himſelf, tenderly drew her on his knee.—"Why does my Fanny weep?" ſaid he. "Her heart ought to be always at reſt." "Oh, Sir," replied ſhe, "your goodneſs overpowers me."—"My love," ſaid Sir John, "you ſee Auguſta has begun to yield. From a temper like her's, we muſt expect this ſlow and ſullen acquieſcence.—Be happy, I entreat you."—Fanny roſe from his knee, and, falling on her's, wept, and ſaid, "I do

not

not merit this favour. Indeed I do not." "Compoſe yourſelf, my love," anſwered Sir John, "and go to bed. To-morrow you ſhall accompany me to Doncaſter, where we will make a few purchaſes for you, as we ſhall dine next week at Lord Calſhot's." While he was ſpeaking he had raiſed her from the ground, and once more kiſſing her fair forehead, wiſhed her a good night, and left the room.

Fanny went to bed, but ſhe had no inclination to ſleep. The events of the day gave her too much to think of.—The ſudden change in her fortune,—the goodneſs of Sir John,—the notice of Cecil, the apparent partiality of Lady Suſan, all conſpired to fill her young heart with joyful expectations. Her only cauſe of diſtreſs was the untoward temper of Auguſta. "But," ſaid ſhe, to herſelf,

herſelf, "I have read, that patience and ſweetneſs of temper never fail to ſucceed with the hardeſt hearts. Miſs Sinclair is angry, but ſhe has no reaſon to hate me, and I will be ſo patient that I will make her love me." She reaſoned more on this ſubject, when ſhe fell to contemplating the bright ſide of her fortune. Here gratitude to Sir John, friendſhip for Lady Suſan, and eſteem for Mr. Cecil, opened a field of happineſs. She ſuffered the weight of hope to turn the balance, and fell into a ſound and happy ſleep. Charming ſeaſon of youth, when the gay ſpirits gild every ſcene, and hide, beneath ſome fairy ſtructure of ideal pleaſure, the ſtorms which threaten, and the ills which lower.

Fanny then roſe in the morning all delight and hope; and met Sir John Sinclair in the breakfaſt-room, with a

face adorned with ſmiling beauty. He received her with tranſport, and ſhe reſpectfully ſaid "How, Sir, ſhall I ever thank you ſufficiently for the goodneſs which has thus raiſed me?" — "By looking ever," anſwered he, "as you do now, lovely and contented."

A meſſage now arrived from Auguſta, that ſhe was a little indiſpoſed, and ſhould breakfaſt up ſtairs. Sir John ſaid nothing, nor was he in his heart diſpleaſed at having to himſelf the company of his fair *protegée*.

After breakfaſt he ſent up to inform Miſs Sinclair that he was going to take Fanny to purchaſe ſome neceſſaries at Doncaſter, and begged to know whether ſhe would accompany them; deſiring Mrs. Bruton would. — Miſs Sinclair's anſwer

anſwer was, "that ſhe was too unwell, and could not ſpare Mrs. Bruton."

This reply rouſed Sir John's anger; he roſe in a moment, and flew to Auguſta's room, where he found her not the leaſt indiſpoſed, except in temper, for her face expreſſed revenge and fury. He ſaw that it was neceſſary to be determined.—"Auguſta Sinclair," ſaid he, "you do as you pleaſe about going, but you are perfectly well, and I want Mrs. Bruton."—"Poſſibly you may," ſaid ſhe, "but ſo do I."

"My dear Miſs Sinclair," ſaid the fawning Mrs. Bruton, "you are much better than you were; and, as Sir John wants me, you can diſpenſe with my attendance this morning."—"She can! ſhe ſhall!" reſumed Sir John, in a voice of thunder; "ſo go and get ready. The

carriage waits."—Auguſta now burſt into tears, but they were tears of anger and pride, not the ſalutary drops that ſoften and amend the heart. "You are determined to puſh me to the utmoſt," ſaid ſhe, peeviſhly; but go and adorn your new favourite, and leave your neglected daughter to her pleaſant reflections."

Mrs. Bruton now again interpoſed, and by ſome ſoothing counſels, at laſt perſuaded Miſs Sinclair to aſſume a leſs peeviſh air, and a ſort of reconciliation took place between the father and daughter. She even condeſcended to go to Doncaſter, "to aſſiſt," as Mrs. Bruton ſaid, "with her unerring taſte, in the purchaſes to be made for Fanny."

It was not without ſome regret that Fanny beheld Miſs Sinclair advancing;

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but seeing a sort of forced good-humour in her looks, ventured to thank her in an humble tone of voice for coming to assist in the business of the morning, adding, "she was happy to see her better." Augusta received this little speech with a cold indifference, and made no answer. This is hard, thought Fanny, however no answer is better than a cross one.

They proceeded silently enough to the place of their destination; and now Miss Sinclair began again to shew her spite. She objected on some frivolous pretence or other, to every thing that was shewn for Fanny, till she had made several purchases for herself, of the best articles produced; and then, after long deliberation with Mrs. Bruton, bought two or three trifles for Fanny. She saw plainly enough the meanness of the pro-

ceeding, but had humility enough to think the worſt were above her expectations, and would anſwer every purpoſe for her.

The interval before the day appointed for dining at Lord Calſhot's, was ſpent in contriving a hundred whims for Miſs Sinclair's dreſs; in all of which Fanny aſſiſted with the greateſt good humour; and, poſſeſſing a great deal of natural taſte, ſucceeded, ſometimes, in pleaſing Miſs Sinclair; for the gratification of her perſonal vanity, moſt certainly lulled aſleep the iraſcible paſſions of her mind. They were indeed occaſionally roufed by the careſſes which Sir John now and then gave to Fanny before Auguſta.—To behold her rival treated like a favourite child, was more than ſhe could bear, and her ſpleen frequently broke out in angry hints, and arrogant diſpleaſure.

Mr.

Mr. Cecil too called one morning, while the ladies were engaged in contriving a head-dreſs. Miſs Sinclair was ſeated before a large glaſs,—her hair nicely arranged, and Fanny adorning it with a profuſion of ſilver gauſe, feathers and flowers, according to the directions of the haughty fair one. "Venus at her toilette," cried he as he entered. "Where are your other attendants fair Goddeſs? Have you diſmiſſed the two elder Graces, retaining only the charming Euphroſyne?—Do not let me diſcompoſe the labours of the day," ſaid he, "fancy me an attendant Cupid, or the meſſenger of the gods, come on ſome errand of love.—But, beautiful Goddeſs," added he, "do not allow ſuch a profuſion of finery. Your own native charms ought not to be diſgraced by ſo many meretricious ornaments."—"Lord, Mr. Cecil," ſaid Auguſta, "how fine you talk!"

"Nay," ſaid he," in plain, common language, you dreſs a great deal finer than I talk. You muſt be very diffident of your own charms, Miſs Sinclair, to try to attract notice by any foreign aid.—Here is a little charmer," ſaid he, turning to Fanny, "who underſtands theſe matters better."—" Very likely indeed!" retorted Miſs Sinclair.

" Indeed," added Cecil, " ſimplicity in dreſs can never be unbecoming, but too much ornament very eaſily may."—" According to your opinion, poſſibly," ſaid Auguſta; " but, remember, Sir, I dreſs to pleaſe myſelf, not you."—" I do not know that," retorted Cecil drily; " for though you may not ſet your cap at me in particular, it is certainly pointed at the men in general; and the lady who was only admired by her own ſex, would be but ill gratified for the labours of her toilette."

toilette." — "Oh good God!" cried Miſs Sinclair, "I am ſure men in general are no judges of a woman's dreſs." "But the beſt in the world of a woman's beauty," reſumed Cecil; "they may not know the dictates of faſhion, but they ſurely know whether or not the effect is becoming."

"And all this fine talking," ſaid Auguſta coldly, "is to tell me I dreſs unbecomingly. You may ſpare yourſelf the trouble, Sir; my dreſs, and the admiration it attracts, ſatisfies my humble heart, which does not aſpire to the honour of your approbation." Cecil bowed, and, perceiving Sir John in the garden, quitted the angry fair one, and joined his friend.

The inſolence of Cecil, as ſhe termed it, unhinged her temper for the whole

day.— He had found fault with her dreſs ;—he had ſeemed to prefer Fanny, and ſhe ſet him down for an unpoliſhed brute. Yet ſhe was not ſo indifferent to his praiſe as ſhe profeſſed to be; and a preference ſhewn by the loweſt of beings to Fanny, would have been ſufficient to irritate her paſſions. Of courſe therefore nothing further could pleaſe her that day, and all might have elapſed in diſcontent, had not young Farland called in in the evening, and reſtored her ſelf-ſatisfaction by a few extravagant compliments.

The important day at length arrived ; the morning was wholly devoted to the labours of the toilette, at which Fanny good-humouredly offered to aſſiſt. The door was bolted to prevent Sir John's intruſion ; but ſo difficult was Miſs Sinclair to be pleaſed, that the hour of de-

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parture approached before she had near done, or Fanny begun to dress. Sir John now came to the door;—"You can't come in, Papa," cried Augusta; "The coach is almost ready," said he, and I cannot find Fanny. She is not in her own apartment."—"Hush," said Miss Sinclair, seeing the artless Fanny was going to reply, "Perhaps she is walking, Sir."—"Impossible," answered Sir John; "it rains hard. But let me in, Augusta; I want to speak to you."—"I cannot indeed, Papa; I shall be dressed immediately, and then I will come down."

Sir John walked away; and Fanny said, "dear Madam, I should wish to stay at home. I will, if you please."—"Oh, plead a head-ach," replied Miss Sinclair, "or my father will have you go. There, I can finish now without

you; you had better go." Fanny curtſied and withdrew to her own apartment.

Sir John, who ſuſpected the truth, had been waiting in the gallery for the opening of his daughter's door, and ſeeing his doubts confirmed, fell doubly angry with Auguſta, for her conduct and her equivocation. He went up to Fanny, however, and, taking her hand, ſaid ſoftly, "Why are you not yet dreſſed, my love?"—"I meant to beg you to excuſe my attendance, Sir," replied Fanny.—"How ſo," ſaid Sir John, "are you not well?" Fanny's voice, unuſed to uttering an untruth, faultered as ſhe ſaid ſhe had a head-ach; and Sir John, in a moment diſcovering the truth, ſaid, "What, has Auguſta laid her high commands upon you then? Come, come, my love, your counte-

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nance betrays you; dreſs quickly, I command you."

Fanny withdrew, and, ſighing, began her toilette. A very few minutes compleated it. A comb inſtantly adjuſted her lovely ringlets, which required no art to arrange them; and as her clothing were all ſimple, they were inſtantly put on. Her form and figure graced all her apparel; and, beautiful as was Miſs Sinclair, covered with ornaments, Fanny was more beautiful, and far more intereſting, in her touching ſimplicity.

Auguſta's looks betrayed ſome ſurprize at ſeeing Fanny prepared to go with them; and Sir John, willing by a different conduct to procure Fanny kinder treatment from his daughter, whiſpered to her, "Oh, ſhe talked of not going;

ing: but I would not hear of ſuch fancies." But poor Sir John knew not the clue to Auguſta's heart. A ſelfiſh pride was its firſt motive;—to this all her actions tended,—in this all her feelings were abſorbed;—the next grand ſenſation of her heart was hatred to Fanny; and ſhe inſtantly fell in with her father's new humour, and called it airs in Fanny to think of ſtaying at home when ordered to go out. Sir John was confounded to find that the ſpirit of contradiction even would not lead his daughter to his wiſhes; and determined henceforth to be kind to Fanny his own way, and endeavour to render her ſituation as tolerable as he could.

Calſhot-houſe was not very diſtant from the lodge; and they were received with the utmoſt politeneſs and attention by the Earl and Counteſs. Lady Sophia

phia was charmed to see Miss Sinclair, and Lady Susan welcomed Fanny with an affection which thrilled through her heart. They found a pretty large company already assembled; and the dinner hour was past, yet they were not called into the eating-room. Lady Calshot looked at her watch, and Lord Calshot seemed impatient. At length Sophia exclaimed, "here he is, and Mr. Eustace with him." Soon after the door opened, and Lord Calshot introduced Lord de Grey to Miss Sinclair and Fanny.

Lord de Grey had been riding all the morning, his hair was unpowdered, and his dress had not been arranged; he was in boots, for he had alighted at the gate with Mr. Eustace, who, however, was infinitely more dressed than his Lordship. He made his apologies

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to the company with infinite grace; but the old Earl did not ſeem diſpoſed to receive them favourably, being rather fond of ceremony than eaſe. The error, however, was not now to be remedied, and it was neceſſarily paſſed over.

Miſs Sinclair, eager to gratify a curioſity ſhe had long felt, fixed her eyes on Lord de Grey. She beheld a young man of twenty-four, in a rough undreſs, unhurt by appearing in ſuch a pickle before ladies. His eyes, by chance, met her fixed ſtare, and, without appearing either pleaſed or embarraſſed, wandered inſtantly to ſome other object. She was ſure he was ſtupid and conceited, and turned her attention to his companion, Mr. Euſtace.— Mr. Euſtace was about the ſame age as Lord de Grey; of a middling height, but extremely well made. Though in a riding-dreſs, it was

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eaſy to ſee his toilette had not been neglected. His hair was arranged in a negligent feather, his teeth were white, his cravat large, his waiſtcoat ſhort; and, in ſhort, his whole dreſs was ſo well fancied, and his appearance ſo agreeable, that Miſs Sinclair thought him worth a few glances.

They were now called to dinner.—The ladies were led to the eating-room with infinite ceremony. Mr. Euſtace had the good fortune to conduct Miſs Sinclair, and placed himſelf beſide her at table. Mr. Cecil had taken the hand of Lady Suſan, and Mr. Farland, with ſome diſcontent, eſcorted Fanny. She was ſeated between her beau and Lady Suſan's, and oppoſite to Mr. Euſtace and Miſs Sinclair, who had Lord de Grey on the other ſide of her. Offended at his not paying her an unli-

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mited and marked attention, which ſhe thought her due from all men, Auguſta entered wholly into converſation with Mr. Euſtace, leaving Lord de Grey to amuſe himſelf with the lady he had led to the table, the Counteſs Dowager of Ilton, a ſexagenary widow, blind of one eye, and unfortunately very hard of hearing. The old lady was ſubject to the uſual failing of deaf people, an aptneſs to a ſullen humour, which encreaſes in proportion to the gaiety of the company. Lord de Grey was aware of her diſpoſition, and endeavoured, by every attention in his power, to keep the Counteſs amuſed. Farland, diſappointed and chagrined at ſeeing a ſtranger in a place he thought in a degree his right, was almoſt rude to Fanny, never paying her the leaſt civility; but ſhe was too little accuſtomed to attention to feel hurt at the want of it. Grateful for that

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of Cecil and Lady Sufan, who treated her with diftinguifhed kindnefs, fhe ventured to join in their chat without referve. But the dinner was ftately and tedious. Every form was fcrupulouſly obſerved, and Fanny began to think a long time had been paſſed at table, when Lady Calſhot roſe to retire. The ladies attended her to the drawing-room, and while a formal and unintereſting converſation took place, in which Miſs Sinclair, as head of her family, was included, Lady Sufan contrived to draw her young friend into a little ſociable chat at a diſtant window.

She told her that her mother had it in contemplation to aſk Miſs Sinclair and her to paſs a little time with them, and enlarged on the pleaſure it would give her. Fanny's eyes brightened at the intelligence. "And is it poſſible, Ma-

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dam, Lady Calſhot can mean to include me in the invitation?—Oh how happy ſhould I be to ſpend my time with you!" "My dear Fanny," replied Lady Suſan, "I ſhall be delighted to have you. Your friendſhip will afford me real ſatisfaction."—"And will you ſuffer me to call you my friend?" ſaid Fanny, "Oh, I will never be low-ſpirited any more." She took Lady Suſan's hand, and gratefully preſſing it, looked up in her face, a tear of tranſport ſtarting to her eye, while a ſmile of pleaſure played about her lips.

The two friends continued converſing, unmindful of the ſongs Miſs Sinclair was performing. She had ſome execution, and a ſtrong clear voice, but was totally unacquainted with the graces of pathetic expreſſion, and touching modulation. At length, in a cadenza, at the

the end of a grand bravura ſong, ſhe raiſed her voice ſo loud on one of the high notes, and dwelt on it ſo long, that it alarmed the deaf Lady Ilton, who ſtarted up, and cried, "What's the matter?" Lady Sophia felt the ridicule of the circumſtance, and indulged her laugh at the expence of her friend, who, in the midſt of her harmony, was well aware of what had paſſed. She hurried over the cloſe, and ſtriking a few haſty and diſcordant chords, by way of ſymphony, was riſing from the inſtrument, when the door opened, and the gentlemen entered. Lord Calſhot politely entreated her to be reſeated, and Farland endeavoured to hold her to the chair, but ſhe begged with a ſullen air to be diſmiſſed, when Euſtace, perceiving Lady Sophia's gaiety, went up to her, and begged to ſhare her mirth.

"Oh,

"Oh," ſays ſhe, "it was ſo comic, I wiſh, Euſtace, you had been here; you would have enjoyed the panic upon Lady Ilton's face, when ſhe miſtook a high note for a ſcream of diſtreſs, and called out, "What's the matter?"

"What's the matter, indeed," repeated Euſtace laughing. "I wiſh the lady would repeat the ſong, and I am ſure I would encore the whole ſcene." The laugh went round. The gentlemen crouded round Lady Sophia, who went on with great *naivete*, adding new trifles to her ſtory, till all the men encored the ſong. Miſs Sinclair, angry and mortified, placed herſelf ſullenly enough on a ſopha, nor would ſhe anſwer a word to all Mr. Farland's tender nonſenſe, who had taken his ſeat beſide her. Lady Ilton perceived the laugh ſhe had occaſioned, and was offended alſo; and Lady Cal-

ſhot was angry with the imprudence of her daughter, whoſe indulgence of her gaiety had occaſioned all theſe little affronts.

Lady Suſan was now called upon to the piano-forte, and the ſoft and pathetic ſtyle of her performance formed a ſtrong contraſt with the bold and loud muſic of Miſs Sinclair. She was entreated to ſing, and in vain ſeeking to excuſe herſelf, called on her brother to join her in a duet. They performed Jackſon's beautiful canzonet of "Take, oh take thoſe lips away."——Fanny, whoſe ſoul was harmony itſelf, liſtened with the utmoſt attention, gazing alternately on the two performers.— She looked at Lord de Grey as an angel of melody.—She looked at Lady Suſan as her amiable friend.—At laſt the muſic ceaſed, and ſome of the company began

began to depart. When the room was a little cleared, Lady Calſhot made her requeſt to Sir John Sinclair. "Her daughters," ſhe ſaid, "had the warmeſt affection for Miſs Sinclair; they admired her young friend.—Would he permit the two ladies to paſs ten days or a fortnight at Calſhot-houſe? It would infinitely oblige her."

A thouſand thoughts inſtantly crouded to Sir John's mind. He was very well pleaſed that Auguſta ſhould go, as it would forward the intended match between her and Lord de Grey; but Fanny!—could he part with Fanny?—yet it was impoſſible to grant the one and refuſe the other, and equally impoſſible to refuſe Lady Calſhot; he therefore conſented, and the next day but one was fixed on for their viſit.

Fanny heard it with tranſport; and her eyes, turned on Lady Suſan, emphatically ſpoke the feelings of her mind.—Lord de Grey was beſide his ſiſter at that moment: and, in a polite manner expreſſed the pleaſure he felt in the condeſcenſion of Sir John. Fanny curtſied, but the glow that animated her features was fled. LadySuſan's words recalled it in a moment. "My dear girl," ſaid ſhe, "remember your promiſe to me."—"Ah," ſaid Fanny, with returning warmth, "can you doubt my remembering it?—You ſhall ſee how punctual I will be."—"May I know this promiſe?" ſaid Lord de Grey earneſtly. Fanny looked in Lady Suſan's face, as much as to ſay, do you anſwer: and Lady Suſan ſaid, "Only an arrangement for our morning amuſements, my inquiſitive brother."—"Will you permit me to be of your party?" aſked he again. "Sometimes, if you are

very good," ſaid Lady Suſan: "but it muſt be as my young friend here likes."—"Your young friend," replied his Lordſhip, "looks all goodneſs and condeſcenſion"—"Oh," ſaid Lady Suſan ſmiling, "looks are deceitful things. Never truſt them, brother."—"I will not mind you, Suſan," ſaid Lord de Grey, "I am ſure on further acquaintance with this lady, I ſhall find that looks like her's are the true index of her ſoul." Fanny coloured, but was now called on to depart. Lord de Grey ran to offer his hand to Miſs Sinclair, and Sir John taking Fanny's, intreated Lord and Lady Calſhot not to quit the drawing-room, ſhut the door after him, and led her down ſtairs.

When the coach drove off, Miſs Sinclair profeſſed herſelf much diſpleaſed with her hoſts and their amuſements.—"It had been a horrid ſtupid day; and

then

then that Lord de Grey that was ſo much talked of, ſhe thought him a wretch." "How ſo?" ſaid Sir John, ſorry to hear her ſay ſo. "He is ſurely a fine young man."—"Oh, he was ſuch a ſhocking figure, ſo inattentive, ſo ill-dreſſed.—She liked Mr. Euſtace better by half.—Then Lady Calſhot was ſuch a prim old lady, and the Earl ſo ceremonious." In ſhort, ſhe was tired, and the moment the coach reached home, ſhe withdrew. Fanny was going alſo; but Sir John, too much pleaſed with an opportunity of having her to himſelf, took her hand, and aſked her if ſhe too was tired.—She anſwered, "Not in the leaſt."—"Then ſtay a little, my dear girl," ſaid he, "it is quite early yet."

In the ſhort time ſince her introduction to the parlour, Sir John had quite contrived to win the inexperienced Fanny's grateful affection. The voice

of kindneſs, the tones of tenderneſs, though ſhe had never before experienced them, vibrated too exactly in uniſon with her own heart not to fill it with delight.—She knew not the delights of the filial tie—ſhe knew not the bleſſings of parental fondneſs,—but ſhe imagined her orphan ſtate fathered by the goodneſs of Sir John.—Ah, thought ſhe to herſelf, had I really been ſo happy as to have had my parents continued to me, thus would my father have looked on his Fanny, thus delighted in her company. With ſuch thoughts as theſe ſhe loſt all reſtraint with Sir John;—ſhe talked to him as an indulged daughter prattles to the fond papa, and received his careſſes with a pious and filial pleaſure.

The feelings of Sir John towards his fair *protegée*, were not perhaps quite ſo parental. He was indeed charmed with her

her innocence;—her unſullied virtue gave him tranſports;—but they were the guilty pleaſures of a libertine, who hopes to nip the fair bloſſom, to ſoil the angelic purity. Fanny was, however, totally unconſcious of all this. Hitherto, indeed, her mind was ſo free from all ideas of the kind, and had been ſo little matured in the ſchool of the world, its errors and its modes, that though ſhe knew indeed that men and women married, ſhe had not a notion of love.—The gallantry ſhe ſaw practiſed, ſhe underſtood not; and the compliments occaſionally paid to herſelf, embarraſſed, much more than they pleaſed her. She was however warmly alive to kindneſs, though not to compliment;—her heart exulted, though her vanity never triumphed; and every mark of affection or eſteem thrilled her feelings with delight, though the admiration of the world had no power to pleaſe her uncor-

rupted mind. In this light ſhe conſidered the favour of Sir John Sinclair towards her. She accepted his offer therefore with undiſſembled pleaſure, and ſeated herſelf beſide him.

The converſation naturally fell on the intended viſit.—She expreſſed in artleſs terms, the ſatisfaction it gave her, and the advantages ſhe hoped to derive from Lady Suſan's friendſhip, who had promiſed her ſome leſſons in muſic. This brought to Sir John's recollection, her deficiency in that art, when he thought he had paid for her inſtruction in it.—He gathered from her anſwers, that Miſs Sinclair had thought it an unneceſſary accompliſhment for her, and had therefore taken double leſſons herſelf.—Sir John was angry;—he expreſſed his anger; and Fanny, alarmed and uneaſy, endeavoured to ſoothe him.—Could her endeavours fail of ſucceſs? Sir John promiſed

promiſed, in compliance with her entreaties, not to mention the circumſtance to Auguſta.

He wanted to caution her againſt the attractions of Lord de Grey.—But he knew enough of women to be ſure that a caution, in ſuch a caſe, is ſufficient to defeat its own purpoſe. He conſidered much her youth, her innocence, her ſimplicity; he ſaw that her boſom yet knew nothing of paſſion, and he dreaded to alarm its guileleſs repoſe. To guard her againſt Lord de Grey, was to direct her attention to him;—was to teach the native ſenſibility of her heart that there was ſome poſſible conſequence to reſult from the acquaintance of men.—Yet to ſuffer her innocence to go without a guard into the free ſociety of a young man, was what he could by no means conſent to.—At laſt his good genius furniſhed him with an idea, which anſwered

his purpoſe without inſtructing the young heart of his pupil. With an air of confidence he told Fanny, as a ſecret, that Auguſta Sinclair was the deſtined bride of Lord de Grey. Indeed, out of regard to the peace of his lovely ward, he condeſcended to inform her of more than was abſolutely true, for he told her that Lord Calſhot and himſelf were engaged to forward the match, and that Lord de Grey was informed of their intentions.— "He had not," he ſaid, "yet made Auguſta acquainted with the plan, as to her perverſe temper, he knew, ſuch a ſtep would be the ſureſt means of ſetting her againſt it."

Fanny heard all he had to ſay, and aſſured him ſhe would not inform Miſs Sinclair of the ſecret. Sir John now told her ſhe would probably have ſome little wants, for which ſhe would not like to apply to Auguſta, and he ſhould

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be at a diſtance; he therefore put into lier hand a purſe, containing twenty guineas, and told her not to be ſparing of whatever would give her pleaſure, but to apply to him without fear for a further ſupply.—She would have refuſed him, ſaying, ſhe had no uſe for money. But Sir John told her ſhe would ſoon learn the female art of diſpoſing of it; and Fanny, with many thanks, roſe to retire. He took hold of her hand, and drawing her to him, put his arm round her pliant waſte, and after a few paternal kiſſes, ſufferd her to depart.

The ſucceeding day was ſpent in preparations for the viſit, which Miſs Sinclair declared would be horridly dull; but which filled Fanny's gentle boſom with delight, as ſhe ſhould now enjoy a happineſs ſhe was ſo little acquainted with as a pure and tender friendſhip.—Mrs. Bruton was very angry that Fanny

was invited, and not herſelf; and did all ſhe could to enrage Miſs Sinclair againſt her companion; but the ſight of Fanny, dreſſed for her journey, with ſimplicity yet elegance, did more againſt her in Auguſta's mind, than the eloquence of Mrs. Bruton, though it was a cauſe in which even her poor arguments never failed of their effect.

They ſet out then, all malice and anger on one ſide, all hope and joy on the other; with Miſs Sinclair's woman on the oppoſite ſeat of the coach.—After a ſilent and reſerved ride, the carriage ſtopped at Calſhot-houſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

OUR fair viſitors were received by the Earl and Counteſs with infinite politeneſs, and by the two young ladies with affection and delight. They arrived nearly at dinner-time, and at table Lord de Grey made his appearance. He was polite and attentive, but by no means diſtinguiſhed Miſs Sinclair by any gallantry; and ſhe who ſighed after univerſal admiration, and thought herſelf entitled to indiſcriminate homage, was piqued by his indifference; and though ſhe thought him very ſtupid, determined, if poſſible, to chain him to her beauty.

The evening was ſpent with ſome degree of form; but the mornings were all given to the ſeparate inclinations of the party. Lady Sophia and Miſs Sin-

clair uſually made viſits, walked or rode together. Fanny was the conſtant companion of Lady Suſan, who found a thouſand charms in her ingenuous attachment. Lady Suſan was highly accompliſhed. She not only played and ſung with a grace and excellence peculiar to herſelf, but ſhe painted in all ſtyles with wonderful ſucceſs. Her flowers ſo nearly imitated nature, that in viewing them, one would have thought ſhe could not equal them in any other ſtyle; but her landſcapes were equally beautiful, and her figures uncommonly elegant and expreſſive. She excelled in all works of ingenuity; nor did ſhe diſdain the inferior knowledge of a woman, plain-work, accounts, and the regulation of a family.

Fanny beheld the various perfections of her friend with aſtoniſhment, and ſighed to think, that of all theſe acquirements, ſhe had not even the rudiments

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of one. She lamented to Lady Susan her absolute deficiency, who offered her any instructions that would assist her progress in any of those branches; at the same time saying, "Yet, my dearest Fanny, except needle-work, reading, and writing, with the management of a family, none of these are truly valuable, or perhaps at all conducive to the happiness of life. A mind full of resources in itself, will not need the trifling assistance of these arts to render itself amiable and useful; the social virtues, and polished manners, are far beyond every possible accomplishment."

Fanny, to whom the opinion of Lady Susan was an oracle, felt her emulation sink as she spoke, and considering the disadvantages she should suffer at Sinclair-house, where, probably, she would find it inconvenient to pursue her studies, she determined to relinquish all accomplishments,

pliſhments, and only endeavour to be the plain, but amiable character deſcribed by Lady Suſan.

Lady Calſhot had contrived ſeveral parties of pleaſure for her young gueſts; and had ſo agreeably varied the time, that Miſs Sinclair felt a regret when the week expired; and being much preſſed by all the family to prolong her ſtay, readily conſented to paſs another week at Calſhot-houſe.

Fanny was the happieſt of beings.—Miſs Sinclair treated her with decent civility; the Earl and Counteſs with politeneſs, Lady Sophia with good humour, and Lady Suſan with the affection of a ſiſter. Lord de Grey was particularly partial to his ſiſter Suſan, and very often paſſed the morning with her. He uſed to read to her as ſhe worked, or amuſe her with his flute; or with what

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perhaps was moſt agreeable of all, a free and unreſerved converſation. The addition of Fanny's company did not interrupt his Lordſhip's uſual mode of conduct; and though, at firſt, Fanny felt more embarraſſed in his preſence than when with Lady Suſan only, yet there was a candour, a benevolence, a mildneſs, in Lord de Grey's manners, which ſoon ſet her perfectly at eaſe; and the ſiſterly freedom with which ſhe treated Lady Suſan, ſoon ceaſed to be diminiſhed by the company of Lord de Grey.

The ſecond week paſſed even more rapidly than the firſt with Fanny. Auguſta thought differently.—She found Lord de Grey ſo indiſpoſed to fall in love with her, that, mortified and angry, no intreaties could prevail on her to paſs the appointed day; but, having engaged the company of the two Lady

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de Greys at Sinclair-lodge, ſhe took her leave, much to the regret of the innocent Fanny.

The moſt ſocial intercourſe between the two families now took place; they were within an eaſy diſtance of each other, and the young ladies were inſeparable. Sir John ſaw with regret the encreaſing friendſhip between his ward and Lady Suſan, at whoſe penetration he trembled; but, earneſt as he was, to unite his daughter to Lord de Grey, he knew not how to prevent, or put a ſtop to the uſual intercourſe. A hundred times he wiſhed he had not drawn his lovely Fanny from her original obſcurity, as then he could have permitted the abſence of his daughter with the more pleaſure, as it would have left him in full poſſeſſion of his idol's company; yet he ſaw with delight the improving perfections of the charming Fanny.—

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Her perſonal charms, every day nearer maturity, were every day more captivating. Her manners, innocent and modeſt, were poliſhed by her intimacy with Lady Suſan; her native graces were heightened, and her natural good underſtanding developed by this fortunate acquaintance. — As her age advanced, her ſenſibility increaſed, and Sir John beheld her eye often clouded with tears, and ſaw her lovely boſom heaving with repreſſed ſighs; a change which intereſted him. At firſt, hope and joy had repreſſed all low ſpirits. The tear which ſometimes roſe to her eye, on Miſs Sinclair's harſh ſpeeches, was eaſily checked, and a natural ſmile in a moment played round her lips.

Sir John, with the vanity natural to him, flattered himſelf his delicate attentions had created him an intereſt in

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the boſom of his *protegée*; and miſtook her frequent ſoft melancholy for the ſymptoms of a growing attachment to himſelf. Fanny was indeed attached to Sir John, but it was with a true filial reſpect, with a warm and lively gratitude, with a ſentiment of reverence and duty, far unlike the ſoft tranſports of love, which he imagined he had kindled in her unexperienced boſom, and which he felt himſelf whenever he beheld her uncommon lovelineſs.

Lady Suſan indeed ſaw more than ſhe liked, but ſhe flattered herſelf her fears were more lively than her reaſon; that ſuch unjuſtifiable apprehenſions could have no foundation in truth; and determined to do all ſhe could to fortify the heart of her young friend, without alarming her delicacy, or hinting at an idea ſo apparently improbable.

Mr.

Mr. Cecil, after ſome little time, concluded he had found in Lady Suſan the very wife he had been ſo long ſeeking; and, after aſking and obtaining her permiſſion, without much difficulty, made his propoſals in form to Lord and Lady Calſhot, and was, with infinite ceremony, abſolutely rejected. Mr. Farland experienced a ſimilar fate, with this difference, that he totally declined all further viſits at Sinclair-lodge; and Cecil, certain that he poſſeſſed the tender friendſhip of Lady Suſan de Grey, determined to conſole himſelf for his diſappointment in the pleaſure of her unreſtrained converſation, and waiting for ſome more favourable opportunity to continue his uſual friendly viſits to Lord Calſhot's. Lord de Grey, who eſteemed him as much as he loved his ſiſter, was entirely in his intereſt, and often ſaid nothing would give him more ſin-

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cere pleaſure than to ſecure to Suſan and himſelf ſuch a friend as Cecil.

Time had paſſed on unobſerved, without any material alteration, and Miſs Sinclair determined to give a ball on her attaining the age of nineteen, at which period, by her mother's marriage-articles, ſhe became entitled to the jointure ſettled on Lady Eleanor. The greateſt preparations were made for this important event. Sinclair-houſe was adorned with a profuſion of taſte and expence, and all the genteel families in the neighbourhood were invited.

Sir John, ever attentive to adorn his darling Fanny, made her ſome very elegant preſents, a few days previous to the day fixed for the ball, which he deſired ſhe would wear that day. Fanny received them with a painful gratitude.—

She

She knew the unkind manner in which Miſs Sinclair would take this, as ſhe did every mark of attention from her father to Fanny; and ſhe even ventured to entreat Sir John to change the deſtination of the trinkets he had purchaſed, by giving them to his daughter; but Sir John refuſed, with an air of gallantry which ſurprized Fanny. She curtſied low, and retired with her preſent, determined to think no more of them till the day of the ball; but juſt as ſhe had laid the box on her table, Miſs Sinclair entered the room.—"And what baubles have you got there?" ſaid ſhe haughtily; but without waiting for an anſwer, opened the box, and beheld, with inexpreſſible ſurprize, a picture of Sir John, ſet round with brilliants of great value, and an ornament for the hair, of diamonds, ſet with peculiar taſte. She coloured violently, and looking at Fanny with fury in her eyes,—"So this was to have been

been kept a ſecret from me, was it, Miſs?—What other concealed hoards have you got?—By what infamous condeſcenſion have you purchaſed theſe expenſive rewards?—Truſt me, your conduct has not gone unnoticed, though hitherto I have borne it in ſilence; but I am almoſt tired of aſſociating with my father's miſtreſs." With theſe words ſhe flounced out of the room, leaving Fanny petrified at the opinion ſhe had ſo pointedly avowed.

A thouſand different emotions took poſſeſſion of her mind. Her firſt thought was to fly to her dear Lady Suſan, and conſult her on this injurious ſuſpicion; but a ſentiment of gratitude to Sir John, and delicacy towards herſelf, repreſſed this wiſh.—It could be but a ſurmiſe in Miſs Sinclair; ſhe was too conſcious of the want of foundation to feel any alarm. Sir John, ſo parentally kind to her,

could

could his conduct bear such an interpretation?—Would it not be highly criminal in her, who had received such favours from him, to give the most distant hint of such a suspicion to his disadvantage; and for herself, she felt it the greatest possible degradation to have it but for a moment imagined that she was looked on in such a light. Should she then publish her own disgrace?—Should she let Lady Susan know that Miss Sinclair had dared to insinuate such reflections against her?—Lady Susan would think it a difficult point; a curious affair. She would consult her brother, and Lord de Grey would imagine something in her conduct had given room for such an imputation. No, she determined to keep this insult to herself. But the jewels, could she wear them?—Could she bear to adorn herself with what Miss Sinclair called the reward of her condescensions. "Alas, alas," said

she

ſhe, "what have I been guilty of?—Why am I thus inſulted, becauſe I am poor, or becauſe I am culpable. Ah, I am not culpable. My own heart does not reproach me. Lady Suſan loves me, and Lord de Grey treats me with friendſhip. Their penetration is unerring. They would perceive it if I were to blame; and Lady Suſan, dear Lady Suſan, would warn her poor Fanny, if ſhe went aſtray; if ſhe gave way to any unbecoming levity; to any too great condeſcenſion."

She was ſtill in tears when called down to dinner. The traces of melancholy were as viſible in her face as thoſe of anger were in Miſs Sinclair's. Sir John ſaw there had been an altercation, and was ſuſpicious of what had happened; the more ſo as Auguſta was uncommonly haughty to himſelf; as if ſhe was highly

highly offended at the complaiſance he had ſhewn to Fanny.

The day of the ball however arrived at laſt; and Miſs Sinclair was ſhut up in her dreſſing room the whole morning, in conſultation with Mrs. Bruton, and her own maid, on the important article of dreſs. It unfortunately was not Miſs Sinclair's forte. She toiled and toiled, and the more ſhe laboured the more ſhe diſguiſed herſelf; but vanity ſupplied the place of judgment; and, always depending on her own charms, the labours of the toilette were a conſtant ſource of pleaſure, and ſhe uſually put on her ſmiles with her ornaments. This day, however, affairs took another turn. The picture, the pin, were terrible obſtacles to her ſucceſs. Her own diamonds were not half ſo taſty, though new ſet within a twelvemonth by her own direction; and when the family met at din-

ner, neither Fanny nor herſelf were at all equipt. Sir John remarked this with ſome ſurpriſe; and Auguſta, after ſwallowing a haſty meal, returned again to her toilette.

Fanny, her heart oppreſſed, unable to eat, and ſtill more unable to converſe, roſe alſo, and retired at the ſame time. She had delayed her dreſs from a very different motive. She could not bear to put on the jewels.—Good God! as ſuch an idea had entered Miſs Sinclair's head, ſome other perſon, equally candid, might think ſo too; and Auguſta might hint—yet could ſhe be ſo baſe, ſo undutiful—her cruel ſuſpicions. She knew Sir John expected her to wear the elegant preſent he had made her; and ſhe had been endeavouring to find out ſome means of avoiding it. She determined then not to appear dreſſed before her patron, till the company were aſſembled, and

then

then not to be near him; and it would then be too late for her to put on theſe unfortunate jewels.

With this view ſhe went to her apartment, and, dreſſing herſelf with ſome expedition, ſhe ſat down to her book; which, intereſting as it generally was to her, could not now divert her attention for a moment, from the fatal ſubject which occupied her mind. Her boſom heaving repeated ſighs, and her eyes overflowing with unheeded tears, which dropped on the neglected page, ſhe ſat intenſely loſt in thought, when Sir John entered the room. She ſcarcely heard him, and, concluding it to be the ſervant, lifted her book, and pretended to be reading, while he ſtood for a minute gazing at the lovely object of his unhallowed wiſhes. The ſimplicity of her dreſs admirably ſet off the elegance of her figure; and, while one fair hand

ſupported the book, the other, under pretence of ſupporting her forehead, ſhaded her lovely eyes, from which Sir John's attentive ſurvey ſaw the drops falling on her agitated boſom. At length, in a tender manner he ſaid, hardly above a whiſper, "Why weeps my Fanny?" taking the book from her hand, and ſeating himſelf beſide her: "Weeps ſhe for real, or for fancied woes?" He looked in the book, which ſhe had unconſciouſly opened at the Merry Wives of Windſor, over which ſhe was crying with ſuch unaffected ſorrow. "Why has my Fanny any ſubject for tears, which ſhe does not tell me of?" aſked Sir John, in the ſame low tone of voice. "Why will ſhe not unveil her cares to her friend, her protector?"

Theſe names called for her reverence and love; and, wiping her eyes, ſhe ſtrove to aſſume a ſmile, ſaying, "a fit

of

of low ſpirits had ſeized her, ſhe knew not why; and ſhe had taken a book to chace them away, but it would not do. However, my dear Sir, I am better now. Indeed," added ſhe, "you have ſpoilt me by your indulgence, I never uſed to be ſo fooliſh, but now I behave like a wayward child."

"Ah, Fanny," ſaid he, "you are not ingenuous; but this is not the moment to preſs any further a converſation too intereſting. You muſt adorn your face with ſmiles, my love, and grace the evening with your gaiety. But where are your trinkets?" continued he; "let me faſten them on."—"Oh, Sir," ſaid Fanny, bluſhing, "excuſe me if I wiſh not to wear them; if I beg to return to you the bountiful preſent;—ſuch things become not my ſituation, and—" "And why does my Fanny think," interrupted he, "that I would lead her

into any thing wrong? Have not I her welfare at heart? and do not I underſtand the delicacy of her ſituation?"

Fanny's heart ſmote her at theſe words. She reproached herſelf for the tumults Miſs Sinclair's cruel words had raiſed in her mind. She repreſented to herſelf how hurt Sir John would be, could he imagine his paternal bounty to her could be ſo miſunderſtood; and bluſhing ſtill a deeper red, replied, "She doubted not his being right, but all the world were not ſo liberal; ſome people might think ſhe had no right to ſuch valuable ornaments, and that they would better become Miſs Sinclair."—"Oh," ſaid he, "this is Auguſta's ſelfiſh way of reaſoning. Why are you not ſuperior to it? But I will not make you uneaſy; it would have given me pleaſure to ſee you ſo ornamented, but I would not for the world diſtreſs you." This was too much

for

for her grateful heart. She flew to her eſcrutore, and, taking out the box, ſaid, "Dear Sir, place them where you pleaſe."—Sir John needed no more; he, with trembling pleaſure, tied the portrait round the fair neck of his love, and placed the pin in her hair; and kiſſing her lovely forehead, thanked her for her condeſcenſion and left her.

Fearful as was Fanny, that Sir John ſhould ever imagine it poſſible for ſuch a ſurmiſe to enter any body's head, every one was not equally apprehenſive, and he had occaſionally heard the ſcandalous idea hinted at, by ſome of his libertine companions, and, knowing Fanny's real virtue, thought ſuch a ſtigma would perhaps be a means of driving her to his arms, as her laſt reſource; he was therefore particularly anxious for her wearing the jewels this night, which would diſplay to ſo many perſons, ſuch

a diſtinguiſhed mark of his attention to her. He plainly ſaw her averſeneſs to wear the trinkets, but concluded ſhe had no other reaſon than aroſe from Auguſta's unreſtrained virulence and envy, and he flattered himſelf that a young and beautiful girl could not deſpiſe ſuch glittering ornaments; at worſt, he was ſure to gain her generous heart, by appearing reluctantly to yield to her wiſhes, and he left her, very well pleaſed with his ſucceſs.

Poor Fanny had another trial to undergo, in her meeting with Miſs Sinclair. Beat out of her wiſhes by Sir John's feigned generoſity, ſhe had now only to return to her former plan of not ſeeing the object of her alarm (now changed to Auguſta) till as late as poſſible in the evening, after the greateſt part of the company were aſſembled; and, waiting till ſhe had heard ſeveral carriages, ſhe

was

preparing, with a beating heart, to enter the ſaloon, when a gentle tap at the door announced a viſitor. She ran to open it, and was delighted to ſee Lady Suſan, who, enquiring why ſhe was not in the ball-room, glanced an approving look at her whole lovely figure, and at laſt caſt her eyes on the finery. "Bleſs me!" cried Lady Suſan, and ſtopped. "Well may you wonder, dear Lady Suſan," ſaid Fanny, "at Sir John's liberality to me; I would fain have refuſed preſents ſo very unſuitable to my ſituation, and ſtill more anxiouſly wiſhed to decline wearing them to-night, but I could not prevail in either point."—"I almoſt wiſh you could have avoided wearing them to-night, my dear," replied Lady Suſan, "for there is a great deal of company below, and people are ſo free of their remarks. I know, to your modeſty, general notice would be painful."

Fanny, tremblingly alive to the firſt part of theſpeech, paid no attention to the laſt, which turned it off on her modeſty, but bluſhed and turned pale alternately; till at laſt Lady Suſan remarking her agitation, and gueſſing too truly all that paſſed in her mind, replied to her emotions, "Fear nothing, my gentle girl; all remarks, all conjectures, will ever end, I am convinced, to *your* advantage."

Terrified more and more at every word Lady Suſan ſpoke, the agitated girl burſt into tears. It was with pain ſhe had repreſſed them ſo long, and they flowed plentifully. Lady Suſan conceived all her inward ſtruggles; and when her kindneſs had ſoothed her to ſome degree of compoſure, ſaid, "I am proud of my young friend; I ſee in the delicacy of her apprehenſive mind, a ſenſe of rectitude and propriety which

will

will always guide her ſafe through all poſſible difficulties;" and then embracing her, "And now, my love," added ſhe, "come to the ſaloon; my brother is impatient to ſee you, and to engage you for a partner." She replied not, but moved towards the door. It is odd, thought Fanny, that Lord de Grey does not dance with Miſs Sinclair; they are very cool lovers; but I ſuppoſe the certainty of their marriage renders any warm courtſhip unneceſſary.

Sir John's having confided his intentions reſpecting the marriage of Auguſta to Lord de Grey, to Fanny, as a ſecret, had ſealed her lips on the ſubject, even to her friend Lady Suſan; and as Lady Suſan never hinted at ſuch a deſign, as indeed how ſhould ſhe?-none of her family having an idea of it, Fanny concluded that ſhe wiſhed to keep up the ſame reſerve; ſhe therefore ſaid nothing

of her reflections, but followed Lady Susan to the saloon.

When they entered, almost all the young folks were dancing; and as Fanny walked slowly to her seat, she saw Lord de Grey dancing with Miss Clara Eustace, sister to the gentleman who was Miss Sinclair's partner. She sighed as she seated herself, for her spirits were low; and Lady Susan soon observed her brother's new engagement. "Dear Fanny," said she, "I am sorry I disappointed you, but I know you do not love strangers, and I had seen my brother disengaged." Ah, thought Fanny, needs it then an excuse, and was Lady Susan to have asked her brother to dance with me; "I am not very well," said she to Lady Susan, "and I shall be very glad not to dance at all to-night." Soon after Cecil came up to claim Lady Susan's promised hand, who would fain not

have

have quitted her young friend; but Fanny would not hear of it, and ſhe remained ſitting alone on the bench.

Her eyes turned involuntarily on the few friends ſhe had in the gay aſſembly; and from Lord de Grey, ſhe turned her attention to his partner. She ſaw a fair, pretty girl of about nineteen, whoſe ſmall features, and delicate perſon, were overwhelmed with a profuſion of ill chooſen ornaments; while her pleaſed countenance ſufficiently declared the delight ſhe felt at being the election of Lord de Grey. Indeed, thought Fanny, ſhe has reaſon to exult, for I ſee no young man at all to compare to him; I wiſh I was his ſiſter, I ſhould be very proud of ſuch a brother; but alas! I have no brother to be proud of; indeed, unleſs he was like Lord de Grey, I think I would rather not have one; I think I am glad I am not dancing with him, for every

body

body would have had their eyes on his partner, and have thought me ill qualified for ſuch an honour.

She was interrupted in her reflections by Sir John Sinclair, who approached her with evident pleaſure in his looks, "My Fanny," ſaid he ſoftly, "you outdo yourſelf! You are beauty itſelf! But are you not dancing?"—"No, Sir;" ſaid ſhe, "I am not quite well, and had rather be a ſpectator than a performer."—"Has Auguſta ſeen you?" ſaïd he. "I don't know, Sir; ſhe has been dancing ever ſince I came in." He ſtaid by her a few minutes longer, complimenting her good looks, and thanking her for her compliance, when he was called to the whiſt-table.

Fanny, once more alone, reſumed her contemplations, and had forgot the gay ſcene ſhe was in, when ſhe was addreſſed

by

by a very ſtriking figure. It was a little elderly man, dreſſed in the very height of the mode; his hair cropt quite cloſe, his waiſtcoat up to his arm-pits, and his breeches proportionably long. His cloaths were an aſſemblage of the gayeſt colours, and his air was no leſs finiſhed than his dreſs. "Don't you dance, Ma'am," ſaid he, with a ſlight bow. "No, Sir;" replied Fanny cooly.—"'Pon my ſoul I'm glad of it," ſaid he, ſeating himſelf beſide her. "Dancing's the devil of a bore; but all the girls are ſo fond of it, there's no getting their company any way but as a partner. Nothing's ſo horrid as dancing in a croud. Miſs Sinclair's quite divine to-night, damme! Is not ſhe Ma'am."

The whole of this language Fanny had heard, but not knowing what to anſwer at the ſeveral pauſes, had ſat ſilent; ſhe now ſaid "Yes; ſhe is very handſome."

handſome."—"Deuce take me," ſaid her eaſy companion, "it is a bad way of entertaining one young lady to talk of the beauty of another."—"Yet this young lady," ſaid a gentleman, who had been ſtanding near, "looks as if ſhe could reliſh ſuch a ſubject."

Fanny looked up with a ſmile at the perſon who ſpoke, and beheld a man of about fifty years of age; a reſpectable figure, dreſſed as ſuitably as her chattering companion was ridiculouſly; and with an expreſſion of ſenſe and benevolence in his countenance that pleaſed her infinitely. She made an involuntary movement to offer him a ſeat. He accepted it. "Well, fair lady," ſaid he, "is not my judgment true? Cannot you bear the praiſe of others?"—"I hope ſo;" replied Fanny, "I ſhould hate myſelf if I could not."—"And a good reaſon why you ſhould bear it too, faith,"

faith," cried her firſt companion; "you know that whatever one ſays of the other girls here, you are the fineſt wench among 'em."

Fanny made no anſwer to this ſpeech; (indeed what could ſhe ſay?) but, turning to her new friend, addreſſed ſome trifling queſtion to him. "Damme, Mordaunt," ſaid the other, "you are always in luck; the girls all talk to you."—"They are not afraid of me, my lord," replied Mordaunt, "*you* are a dangerous man."

After a little more hoity-toity converſation, his lordſhip quitted Fanny, who rejoiced at his departure, to go and gallant ſome more yielding fair; and Mr. Mordaunt told her, "he was Earl of Haughtonbury; and," added he, "I am ſorry that at his time of life he has not learnt to be reſpectable; he is now

ſeeking

ſeeking for a young wife, to begin at his age the domeſtic career, which ought long to have been his delight and happineſs."

A loud whiſper behind her, now attracted Fanny's attention. "She's a deviliſh fine girl! Sinclair's a happy dog!" ſaid one voice. "Yes;" replied another, "and the whole buſineſs is carried on ſo ſnugly too, one would not ſuſpect!"—"No, truly," replied the firſt, "ſeeing her always with Miſs Sinclair." Fanny heard no more; a ſhade came over her eyes; ſhe trembled, changed colour, and fainted away; this accident aſtoniſhed Mr. Mordaunt, who had not heard the whiſper. Lady Suſan flew to her; and Cecil and Lord de Grey, in a moment, carried her out of the room. Lady Suſan and Mr. Mordant followed. As for Miſs Euſtace, ſhe miſſed her partner without knowing

a word

word of the affair; for her eyes had not been directed to Fanny, as Lord de Grey's happened to be at that inſtant.

Their care ſoon recalled her ſenſes; but opening her eyes, and ſeeing herſelf ſo ſurrounded, ſhe turned to Lady Suſan, covered her face with her handkerchief, and burſt into a flood of tears. Lord de Grey beſought her to compoſe herſelf; and enquired if ſhe would have any thing. Without waiting for her anſwer, he brought a glaſs of hartſhorn and water, and gently diſplacing Lady Suſan, beſought her to ſwallow it. She took it in her hand, tried to thank him, but words were denied her. She looked round at Lady Suſan, who, comprehending her meaning, motioned to Cecil to retire. He did ſo, leading off Mordaunt, but Lord de Grey would not go. "She might faint again, and Suſan would want further aſſiſtance." In vain ſhe aſſured

him

him ſhe ſhould not; ſhe could not perſuade her obſtinate brother to go. He was holding Fanny's hand, which was cold, and almoſt lifeleſs. "Oh, Suſan," ſaid he, "ſhe will faint again! Do, my dear little ſiſter," for ſo he often called her, "drink the hartſhorn." "Drink it if you can, my love;" ſaid Lady Suſan, "indeed it will do you good."

Fanny drank it, and ſetting down the glaſs, gave the hand that had held it to Lady Suſan. Lord de Grey kiſſed the one he ſtill kept poſſeſſion of, in gratitude, perhaps, that its fair miſtreſs had left it with him, and waiting for the other's being at liberty to give to his ſiſter. "You are very good to me, Lady Suſan," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall be better in a minute." Then, looking at Lord de Grey, "And Miſs Euſtace, my Lord, do not you return to her?"—"Oh no," ſaid he.

"Oh,

"Oh, Lady Sufan!" cried Fanny, with a deep figh.—Again Lady Sufan nodded to her brother to go. Fanny remarked it; "You are very good," faid fhe, "but I have nothing to fay. Let me not detain you any longer; I am quite able to return," added fhe, rifing, but her knees refufed their office, and fhe funk again into her chair.

"You had better go to bed, my love;" faid Lady Sufan. "Should you like I fhould pafs the night with you?"—"Oh no;" faid Fanny, "you are very good; but indeed I fhall be better preſently; the heat of the ball-room overcame me." Lord de Grey, however, enforced his fifter's requeft, aſſuring her it would be rifking too much to return to the faloon.

Poor Fanny, who felt that the inward diſtreſs fhe ſuffered, was neither to be increaſed

increaſed nor relieved by any outward accident, yet acquieſced in their united requeſt, and roſe to go to her apartment. Lady Suſan offered her arm, but Lord de Grey entreated his little ſiſter to ſuffer him to conduct her to her room, as he was ſure Lady Suſan was not ſtrong enough to be of any real help. Fanny, conſcious of her weakneſs, accepted his offer, and leaning on the brother of her friend, moved to go up ſtairs.

Lord de Grey felt her agitation encreaſe as ſhe walked; her knees trembled, and even leaning on him ſhe found it difficult to advance. He took her in his arms, and, lifting her with eaſe from the ground, carried her up ſtairs.—He ſtopped at the door of her dreſſing-room, and begging Lady Suſan to open it, carried her, ſtill in his arms, to a great chair, where he placed her, and, kiſſing her now burning hand, offered a thou-

ſand

ſand wiſhes for her recovery. She faintly thanked him, and entreated him to return to the ball-room. He left her apartment, and Lady Suſan, ringing for the woman to help, ſtaid with Fanny till ſhe was in bed. She would have remained longer in her room, but Fanny aſſured her ſhe ſhould not ſleep while ſhe had ſo dear a friend by her bedſide, and Lady Suſan unwillingly withdrew. She found her brother on the ſtairs, who anxiouſly enquired after Fanny's health. Lady Suſan was ſure, ſhe ſaid, "it was a mental, not a bodily ailment," and they entered the ball-room together.

Cecil and Mordaunt tenderly aſked after the fair invalid; but Miſs Euſtace, who had learned the cauſe of Lord de-Grey's deſertion, was ſo offended at his thinking any other female of conſequence while ſhe was preſent, that ſhe had liſtened

tened to the entreaties of Lord Haughtonbury, and was friſking down the dance with him, to the no ſmall pleaſure of her rejected partner, who contented himſelf with a ſlight apology as ſhe paſſed.

Sir John Sinclair, who was not ignorant of what had happened, and who very eaſily gueſſed the cauſe, came to Lady Suſan, thanking her warmly for her kindneſs to Fanny, and enquiring where and how ſhe was. The delicate ſenſibility which had ſo overcome her, had made her doubly charming in his eyes, and he aſked if Lady Suſan could gueſs at the cauſe. Lady Suſan replied, "She could not, for Fanny had laid it wholly to the heat of the room." Had not Sir John's preſence, as maſter of the houſe, been neceſſary every where, moſt gladly would he have gone to Fanny's bedſide, to ſoothe the alarm his emiſſaries had

raiſed

raiſed, to watch over her gentle ſlumbers, and to adminiſter to her comfort.

As for poor Fanny, no gentle ſlumbers viſited her weeping eyes. A thouſand times ſhe repeated the fatal words that had alarmed her. Could they apply to any one beſide herſelf? Oh, what a wicked world, ſo to miſconſtrue the generous goodneſs of her paternal friend! She was glad that the preſence of Lord de Grey had hindered her from unboſoming herſelf to Lady Suſan, which ſhe certainly ſhould have done, in the firſt moments of her grief, but for that reſtraint; but ſuch a confidence could have had no effect, but revealing her ſhame to thoſe ſhe moſt wiſhed it hid from. It was plain Lord de Grey had not heard thoſe injurious ſuſpicions, or he would not ſo tenderly have aſſiſted her. She would not for the world they ſhould reach his ears. As for the mean-

ſouled Auguſta, ſhe now never diſturbed her reſt; a new and more powerful cauſe of anxiety had ariſen, and, like Aaron's rod, ſwallowed up all leſſer mortifications. She called herſelf to account for her conduct, her dreſs, her manner; ſhe found no one thing reprehenſible but the fatal trinkets. "Alas!" ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "I have ignorantly tranſgreſſed ſome laws of decorum,—I have innocently offended in appearance, and thoſe who judged me cannot read the heart."

In the midſt of theſe reflections ſhe heard ſeveral carriages drive away; and preſently ſhe heard voices in the gallery. It could not be Sir John and Auguſta already! but evidently there was a man and a woman converſing ſoftly.—A light tap at her door was not unheard, and ſhe called, "Is it Lady Suſan?"—Lady Suſan indeed opened the door,

and

and Fanny plainly ſaw the ſhadow of Lord de Grey in the gallery.

Lady Suſan made many affectionate enquiries; and, ſhocked to hear ſhe had not yet been aſleep, again offered to ſpend the night with her. Fanny, whoſe agitated ſpirits ſtood in need of ſome ſupport, ſo faintly refuſed the offer, that Lady Suſan returned to the door, and ſaid gently, "I ſhall ſleep here, brother; go down and make my excuſes." "How is my little ſiſter?" ſaid he eagerly. "Much the ſame;" ſaid Lady Suſan, "but go down, brother; my mother will be impatient."

Lord de Grey retired, and Lady Suſan, after faſtening the door, undreſſed, and laid herſelf down by the ſide of her unhappy friend. Neither of the ladies being diſpoſed to ſleep, one friendly en-

quiry ſucceeded another, till morning dawned, and found them ſtill converſing.

Lady Suſan, though convinced ſome uneaſineſs of mind had occaſioned her young friend's indiſpoſition, yet found her unwilling to diſcloſe the cauſe; and, certain that no human being ever poſſeſſed more ſincerity, and that ſhe herſelf was in general gratified by her full and free confidence, ſhe concluded that there was ſome peculiar reaſon for her reſerve. Her firſt idea was, that an attachment of the tender kind was riſing in her boſom, and had received a ſenſible blow; but Fanny ſpoke with ſuch perfect unembarraſſment of all the young men preſent, that Lady Suſan changed her opinion; and finding her friend now diſpoſed to be quiet, forbore any further enquiries.

A ſhort

A ſhort and interrupted ſlumber a little recruited Fanny's exhauſted frame; and at her uſual hour in the morning ſhe aroſe ſoftly, leaving Lady Suſan ſtill ſleeping. Before Fanny was ready to go down ſtairs, however, Lady Suſan awoke, and riſing inſtantly, ſaw her fair eyes, full of tears, fixed on the ornaments ſhe was putting in the box. Her ſuperior experience had earlier taught her the cruel inferences poſſible to be drawn from Fanny's ſituation; but fearful of alarming her ſenſibility, or truſting thoſe inferences would never be realiſed, ſhe had confined her thoughts to her own boſom; but from all the events of the preceding evening ſhe began to fear ſomebody, Auguſta, perhaps, had been leſs diſcreet.

Fanny, when ſhe ſaw the ſenſible eyes of her friend fixed on her's, bluſhed, and haſtily put away the trinkets. Lady

Sufan inſtantly conceived the reaſon of her delicate reſerve; and ſure that if her fears were once alarmed, her natural modeſty and rectitude would be her beſt guides, forbore to renew her poignant ſenſations, by a ſingle word leading to the ſubject. She talked indeed induſtriouſly to her; talked of a thouſand indifferent things; at laſt of her family, of her dear brother; and when on this darling ſubject, ſhe was never tired. She expatiated largely in his praiſe. "Never was ſuch a young man, ſo dutiful a ſon, ſo tender a brother, ſo faithful a friend; ſo eminently gentle and pleaſing in his manners, and yet ſo decidedly firm in all his actions. Led by that unerring guide, his own deliberate judgment, my brother," ſaid Lady Sufan, "is not to be turned from his purpoſe in actions where moral good or ill is concerned; in indifferent things no mortal is ſo complaiſant to the will of others."

Fanny readily assented to all Lady Susan said; she had long thought her and her brother the models of two perfect characters, and now openly avowed her opinion, adding, "Would to God I were indeed his sister, as he condescendingly calls me! and that Lady Susan, not to be of higher rank, not to be of more distinguished fortune than I am, but to have some relatives, some dear and kind friend, who should always be my honour and pride, to whom I could apply in all my little distresses, to whom—"—"And why," asked Lady Susan, "does my Fanny want this degree of confidence in us? You could, my love, have no brother or sister more earnest to serve you than Lord de Grey and myself."—"Oh," said Fanny, "I know your goodness, your unmerited partiality to me, and I am sure my heart could not place more real affection and confidence on a sister of my blood; but there are sub-

jects, dearest Lady Susan, there are circumstances which make reserve a duty, otherwise—" Lady Susan made no answer to a speech which proved there was something to confess, but by clasping her friend to her bosom, and assuring her of her friendship.

Fanny, all tenderness, wept on the neck of Lady Susan, till at length recollecting herself, she rose and dried her tears. " No," said she to herself, " the claims of affectionate gratitude which Sir John Sinclair has on my heart, shall never be forgotten; nor will my real veneration for him suffer me to be the first to breathe a hint that it is possible for any one to suspect his honour."

It was not that Fanny suspected it, but she could not bear it should be known to be suspected. Poor innocent, she little imagined the character he had

long

long borne, could not ſuffer a beautiful young woman to live with any reputation in his houſe! Not that Lady Suſan had heard the full extent of the ſurmiſes more freely circulated by Sir John's old libertine companions; her modeſty and real virtue guarded her from hearing tales of the ſort; but ſhe knew enough to alarm her.

Sir John ſoon met them at breakfaſt; but Miſs Sinclair, at all times lazy, and ſeldom at the breakfaſt-table, did not derange herſelf for Lady Suſan; but took her chocolate in bed, and diſpoſed herſelf to ſleep again.

It was a beautiful morning; Sir John went out on horſeback, and the two friends ſauntered to an alcove in the ſhrubbery; here they ſat refreſhed by the cool breezes which roſe from a noble lake before them, when Lord de Grey,

who was come to fetch his ſiſter, approached, and enquired after the health of the lovely invalid. A faint bluſh coloured Fanny's pale cheeks as he came up. She thanked him for his enquiries, and he ſeated himſelf between the two ladies.

After an hour's charming converſation, Lady Suſan and her brother roſe to go; Fanny accompanied them to the gate, and, ſeeing them both enter the chariot, wiſhed them good morning, and they departed. She now ran to her dreſſing-room window, from which ſhe could ſee the road they were going, and, watching them till they were out of ſight, ſhe continued mechanically at the window. "They are gone;" ſaid ſhe ſoftly, "and I am once more alone in the world.—Oh, how truly did Lady Suſan paint the noble character of her amiable brother! Would he were mine alſo! but

he

he is my friend, and happy, far above my merits, am I in that diſtinction."

Lord de Grey was indeed all that his ſiſter had deſcribed him; his firm and manly heart was replete with a feminine ſenſibility; and his fine features and animated countenance, ſpoke the various emotions of his ſoul. Had Fanny been a greater adept in the language, ſhe might probably have read a warmer ſentiment than mere friendſhip for her in the expreſſive eyes of Lord de Grey; for certain it is, that the pleaſure he took in the innocent graces and childiſh ſweetneſs of the lovely Fanny, had ripened with her charms into a pure and ſettled paſſion; it had, however, advanced ſo ſilently that even his beloved ſiſter was a ſtranger to it; himſelf knew not, though he cheriſhed the warm affection, and he watched over the ſweet object of it with the vigilant diſintereſtedneſs of

a guardian angel. Fanny's ſimplicity made her alſo unconſcious of the ſtate of her own heart. She admired, ſhe eſteemed, ſhe loved Lord de Grey; but had ſhe been aware of the nature of that affection, perhaps ſhe would not ſo often have wiſhed herſelf his ſiſter.

Lord de Grey was very partial to Cecil; and on his return home found Lord and Lady Calſhot abſent, with Lady Sophia, and Cecil in the drawing-room. Cecil eagerly enquired after his young favourite, for he was fooliſhly partial to Fanny; Lady Suſan told him ſhe was as well as ſhe was likely to be, for ſhe was not happy."— "Poor girl," ſaid Cecil, his eyes filled with tears, "and has ſhe then ſo young diſcovered the danger of her ſituation?"

Theſe words electrified them; they had all had their ſuſpicions, but Cecil was the

firſt who had ventured to give them vent. Yet the ice being once broke, Lady Suſan acknowledged that ſhe believed ſome circumſtances had alarmed her friend; but that ſhe maintained a very juſtifiable reſerve.—" Juſtifiable!" ſaid Lord de Grey, " It is a noble proof of the delicacy of her ſentiments! She cannot bear the ſhadow of a doubt."—" Indeed," replied Cecil, " if one were ſure ſhe were forewarned—"—" If ſhe were not," ſaid Lord de Grey, " who could warn her?"—" Any real friend," ſaid Cecil, " I would."—" Ah," ſaid Lady Suſan, " ſhe is certainly alarmed." She then recounted all that had paſſed reſpecting the jewels, both the preceding evening and that morning; and the gentlemen concluded ſhe muſt have received ſome intimation.

" My heart bleeds for her," ſaid Cecil. " Dear Lady Suſan, you love this

girl,

girl, do marry me directly, and let her come and live with us."—" You know, Mr. Cecil," replied Lady Susan, blushing but smiling, " I should be too happy—"—" In such a plan." interrupted he. " No;" said she, " I did not say that, but in being able to protect this dear girl; however, at present I am powerless." Lord de Grey scarcely joined in the conversation; he felt an emotion which repressed his words; but Cecil and Lady Susan continued to lament the dangers that threatened their young favourite.

Fanny continued at the window, lost in thought. She could not believe there was any foundation in Sir John's intentions for the cruel whispers she had overheard; but the disgrace to herself and him affected her extremely. Miss Sinclair's horrid insinuations also dwelt upon her mind, and the more she reflected

flected the further ſhe ſeemed from tranquillity. A ſummons to dinner, however obliged her to exert herſelf; for ſhe dared not refuſe on account of her indiſpoſition, knowing how little Miſs Sinclair would admit of any excuſe from her.

There was company to dinner, and two or three young men kept Auguſta in tolerable good humour by their compliments; and Fanny was very well pleaſed to be ſeated beſide Mr. Mordaunt, whoſe kind and reſpectful notice encouraged her.

A gentleman who ſat oppoſite to her, ſhe had never ſeen before; ſhe heard him diſtinguiſhed by the name of Gordon.—Mr. Gordon was not formed to paſs without notice; yet Fanny did not voluntarily grant him her's; but he fixed his attention on her ſo evidently

that

that it pained her, and neceſſarily forced her to obſerve the manners of a man who had marked her out with ſuch a diſtinguiſhed peculiarity.

Mr. Gordon was about twenty-eight; a very fine figure, joined to a handſome face, made him paſs in general for a very captivating being; but there was in his countenance an expreſſion rather repulſive than attractive to Fanny. She was diſpleaſed with the hauteur, the ſelf-conceit, the violence, and the ill-temper, which diſfigured his fine features; his voice was loud and commanding; his manner imperious and overbearing, and his underſtanding, which was naturally good, a ſenſe of his natural ſuperiority, had led him to think above all praiſe. He was evidently conceited of his figure, and thought himſelf too eminently formed to pleaſe to render any conciliating endeavours neceſſary. He choſe, however,

to

to addreſs a great deal of his converſation to Fanny, who, more intimidated than pleaſed by his haughty condeſcenſion, gladly liſtened to all Mr. Mordaunt ſaid, and ſeemed to be deeply engaged in diſcourſe with him; but this ſignified little to her overbearing oppoſite, who thought it of no conſequence to interrupt her converſation with ſuch an old codger as Mordaunt; and every moment rudely put ſome queſtion or other to her, which Fanny modeſtly and conciſely anſwered, turning immediately to her more quiet companion.

Miſs Sinclair with indignation beheld the evident preference with which Mr. Gordon honoured the upſtart Fanny; and, unable to ſupport the idea that ſuch a girl as that ſhould rival her among the men, bent all her endeavours to gain the attention of Gordon, but in vain; and had not Lord Haughtonbury, who

came

came in the evening, addreſſed himſelf wholly to Auguſta, her ill-humour would have been inſupportable. It is true, the figure of Gordon was to her, who never thought about countenance, nor underſtood the charms of the mind-illumined face, infinitely more attractive than that of Lord Haughtonbury; his fortune was enough to have ſatisfied her, for ſhe was rich herſelf; and when ſhe gazed on the beauty of Mr. Gordon ſhe was inclined to be romantic, and think love more eſſential than ſplendour; but when Lord Haughtonbury, with an affected rapture, complimented her beauty, her dignity, her ſenſe, vanity turned the ſcale, and the title of Counteſs of Haughtonbury, with precedence, equipage and pomp, far overbalanced *penchant* and a competence with the handſome Gordon. To Fanny, therefore, of her abundant goodneſs, ſhe left this engaging beau. But Fanny's unconſcious heart

was

was differently diſpoſed; ſhe ſuffered therefore with great pain his marked attentions, and was happy when at length he took his leave.

With Sir John the unfortunate girl had loſt all her eaſe; ſhe became embarraſſed, bluſhed when he ſpoke to her, and cautiouſly avoided his particular notice. At length, feeling herſelf really indiſpoſed, ſhe retired; but her reflections, which were very painful kept her from reſt. She felt diſturbed at Mr. Gordon's attentions; they embarraſſed and diſtreſſed her; ſhe felt that they were bold, and ſhe trembled leſt he had heard the dreadful ſurmiſe; and leſt, while yet perfectly innocent, her reputation was blaſted univerſally; the reſerve, which from her delicate gratitude to Sir John, ſhe had impoſed on herſelf, ſhe felt ſtill determined to ſupport, though ſhe ſighed for a full and free

commu-

communication of her ſorrows to her beloved friend.

Sir John Sinclair was alſo kept waking by the emotions of his mind; he had remarked the embarraſſment, the indiſpoſition of Fanny; it had not eſcaped his obſervation that ſhe had begun to droop from the time of her receiving the jewels; and, flattering himſelf that her young heart ſickened at the firſt conſciouſneſs of a tender attachment, he gave way to the moſt lively joy.—"Yes," ſaid he to himſelf, "her tender and innocent boſom is fully wrought to my wiſhes by my delicate and cautious procedure, and gratitude is changed into an ardent love; my careſſes ſhe is already accuſtomed to, and what but the conſciouſneſs of their meaning can induce her now evidently to avoid them; yet, though ſhe declines them, her ſweet eyes ſpeak no averſion, and I am confident the firſt ſteps

will

will now ſoon be got over, and my happineſs eſtabliſhed in the unreſerved poſſeſſion of her charms."

The ſucceeding day elapſed with no circumſtance worthy notice; but the next, as Fanny was ſitting alone in the library, the door opened, and Mr. Gordon entered. She roſe and curtſied, and ſaid ſhe would ſeek Sir John.—"No, no," ſaid he gaily, "my buſineſs is with you, not with Sir John; he is riding, I know, for I met him as I came hither."

Fanny, aſtoniſhed at this familiar addreſs, replied, "She knew of no buſineſs he could poſſibly have with her;" and begged leave to withdraw. "No, he could not poſſibly conſent to that;" and, ſeizing both her hands, drew her down upon the ſopha, placing himſelf beſide her, one arm round her waiſt,

and

and the other ſtill holding her reluctant hands. "Mr. Gordon," ſaid ſhe, "I entreat you to permit me to retire."—"And do you think," interrupted he, "I am come here for nothing? By God you are a lovely creature!"—"Indeed, Sir," ſaid ſhe, with ſome ſpirit, "you are miſtaken in me. Such conduct as your's—"—"Oh, my love," ſaid he gaily, "none of your hypocriſy; ſuch conduct as mine all women love, for it ſpares their bluſhes, and, making reſiſtance ineffectual, gives them the glory of a triumph, without the mortification of a conqueſt; for you know," added he, boldly looking in her face, "that, however you may talk, or outwardly behave, your own wiſhes concur but too eaſily with our's, not to make your ſucceſs a ſelf-denial."—"I do not know what you mean, Sir," ſaid Fanny. "by inſulting me thus!"—"But I do know; ſaid he, "I know that you are

an

an angel, and that your ſituation is not equal to your merits. Come," ſaid he, "now for a trial only, go home with me, and ſee if I cannot manage better than Sinclair."

Indignation gave her ſtrength; ſhe roſe from the ſopha, and was running to the door, but he haſtily ſtopped her.—"Whither ſo faſt, my charmer?"—"Any where from your hateful preſence!" ſaid ſhe. "Hateful!" repeated he, ſmiling. "How pretty is this lovely anger. Yet look at me, and tell me if indeed I am hateful! Confeſs now I am a better figure than Sinclair."

Merciful God!" exclaimed Fanny, "what will become of me!"—"Oh, no harm," returned the inſolent Gordon, who had again ſeized both her hands. "Why you are infatuated with Sir John, I think." "I do not rightly underſtand you,"

you," ſaid Fanny, "I love and honour Sir John, as my benefactor, my friend, and my father; but for you (contemptuouſly)—"—"Oh," replied Gordon, "there may be times when perhaps you give Sinclair the love he wants as a *cher ami*, without the honour due to a father; however you may carry it in public, in private I believe there may be leſs decorum."—"Help me Heaven!" cried Fanny, "What will this end in?" "Love and a good ſettlement," anſwered Gordon, kiſſing her cheek.

This indignity forced a ſcream from her; and in a moment Cecil entered the room. On his approach Gordon quitted his hold, and the terrified Fanny precipitately ran out of the room, and locked herſelf into her own apartment. Miſs Sinclair had heard the ſcream, and, coming down, found the two gentlemen debating rather warmly in the library.—

She

She enquired the cauſe of contention; and Cecil beginning to ſpeak, Gordon ſaid in a loud key, "Only I gave that ſly little huſſy a kiſs, and ſhe ſcreamed as if I had murdered her."

Miſs Sinclair inſtantly taking Mr. Gordon's part, Cecil ſaw he had no further buſineſs there, and took his leave. He was, however, too anxious for Fanny not to wiſh to ſee her, and, going up ſtairs, tapped at her door. She knew his voice, and, coming to the door, ſaid ſoftly, "I thank you heartily, Mr. Cecil, for your kindneſs, and interference, but, after what has paſſed, you muſt excuſe me if I do not admit you; you will feel the neceſſity of my caution."—"I do," ſaid Cecil, "I admire and honour you; only be careful, ſweet girl; there may be danger where you leaſt expect it." He wiſhed her good morning and left her.

The occurrences of the morning had opened Fanny's eyes to all the horrors of her ſituation. The belief of her infamy could alone have warranted Mr. Gordon's unjuſtifiable conduct. She plainly underſtood the meaning of Cecil's hint; but, though ſhe ſaw the precipices that ſurrounded her, ſhe knew not how to extricate herſelf from them. Friendleſs, inexperienced, young, poor, and innocent, where could ſhe go?—What reſource could ſhe find in a world which ſhe had already found teeming with unprovoked calumny, unlicenſed inſolence, and overbearing arrogance? Her preſent ſituation was certainly ineligible, but could ſhe change it for one which would be leſs ſo? Could ſhe expect to meet from ſtrangers that kindneſs, that ſupport, which ſhe failed to find amongſt her only friends?—And after all ſhe had but ſuſpicious evidence

againſt

againſt Sir John. Was it poſſible he could really mean any injury to the helpleſs orphan he had hitherto ſo generouſly befriended? Ought ſhe, becauſe the malicious world choſe to aſſign ſuch infamous motives for his generoſity, ought ſhe, the object of it, who had ever experienced from him the moſt diſintereſted kindneſs, to coincide with that malicious world, and believe her benefactor ſelfiſh and cruel, becauſe fools would whiſper, and bravos would inſult? Alas! her grateful heart recoiled from the idea; ſhe blamed herſelf for having a moment conſidered things in that light, and determined at length to avoid Mr. Gordon, for her delicacy ſhrunk from hinting at his inſolence to any living ſoul; to entreat Mr. Cecil to keep her ſecret; or, if it had already eſcaped him to Lady Suſan, ſhe was ſure that kind friend would, at her requeſt, let it ſpread no farther. She reſolved, in

her own conduct, to be circumſpect to an extreme; and, by an unexampled caution to defeat the aim of calumny, and diſappoint the ſhaft of malice.

Alas, poor Fanny! ſhe knew not the rapidity with which the dreadful venom ſpreads! She knew not that the being ſhe looked up to with confidence and gratitude, as her friend and benefactor, had himſelf ſet the vile tale agoing, in order to force her to fall into the ſnare he had laid for her. Had ſhe been told this circumſtance, no aſſeverations would have induced her to give it credit; her pure and innocent mind could not have believed there was in the world a ſoul ſo baſe; much leſs that ſuch a baſeneſs could proceed from her reverend protector. She determined therefore to wait with as much patience as ſhe could for the counſel of Lady Suſan, who, if ſhe was informed of Mr. Gordon's inſolence,

lence, by Cecil, would not fail to introduce the ſubject when they met; and from her ſhe then hoped to learn a full explanation of Mr. Cecil's parting caution, and what authority he had for a ſurmiſe ſo evidently pointed at Sir John Sinclair.

CHAP. III.

THE lovely Fanny at length argued herſelf into ſome compoſure, and obeyed the ſummons to dinner, though with a heavy heart, yet with a chearful countenance; her indiſpoſition was her excuſe for the failure of her appetite; and her mind was too wholly occupied by her own ſituation to ſuffer her to throw away a thought on Miſs Sinclair's arrogant indifference. Sir John indeed was, as uſual, all kindneſs and attention; but ſhe ſuffered far more from his tenderneſs than from the mortifying neglect of his daughter. She dared not indulge the gratitude of her heart for his attention, and, however ſhe felt, ſhe received it with coolneſs and politeneſs. Sir John, who attributed her reſerve to a far different

ferent cauſe, ſaw it without diſpleaſure; even with the higheſt gratification. He beheld her young heart yielding to a tender attachment, which ſhe would not indulge with her uſual freedom.

The ſervants had left the room ſome time, when Davies, Sir John's own man, re-entered with a packet of letters. "An expreſs from Lord Calſhot, Sir." Sir John took the packet, and found one for each of the young ladies, from Lady Suſan, and Lady Sophia, and one from the Counteſs for himſelf.

Lady Calſhot's letter briefly informed him that his friend had been ſuddenly ſeized with a paralytic ſtroke, which had deprived him of his reaſon, and of the uſe of half his limbs. Dr. Lewſon, who lived in the neighbourhood, had ordered him inſtantly to Bath, and as they could make but very ſhort journies, they were

to ſet off inſtantly. Lady Sophia's note to Miſs Sinclair was ſhort, and expreſſing her regret for the ſuddenneſs of the accident which deprived her of the pleaſure of ſeeing Auguſta before her departure.

Lady Suſan's billet to Fanny, was as follows:

"The dreadful accident which in a
" moment carries me from my deareſt
" Fanny, however it afflicts me, does not
" make me forgetful of her; I regret
" not having made uſe of the opportu-
" nities I have had, to ſpeak more free-
" ly to her than I have ventured to do;
" but the firſt inſtant of leiſure ſhall be
" devoted to her ſervice; and in the
" mean while I beg her to rely on the
" ſincerity of her very affectionate friend,

"SUSAN DE GREY."

Fanny

Fanny was much embarraſſed by the receipt of this billet; Miſs Sinclair's eyes announced her expectation of ſeeing it, and Sir John looked curious; but it was impoſſible to make it public; and recollecting that timidity and embarraſſment never had availed her with the unfeeling Auguſta, ſhe aſſumed a more decided air, and put her note in her pocket. Sir John, evidently chagrined, ſaid nothing, and Miſs Sinclair had long ceaſed announcing her diſpleaſure to an object ſo much beneath her notice.

Mr. Cecil called in the evening, and the unfortunate event of the morning furniſhed the whole of their converſation. Mr. Cecil ſaid, "He had for ſome time been thinking of going to Bath himſelf, as he had a friend there whom he much wiſhed to ſee, and he propoſed taking this opportunity."—

Auguſta rallied him with more freedom than politeneſs, and with more ſarcaſm than good-humour, on his marked preference, and hopeleſs pretenſions to Lady Suſan de Grey; and at length he replied, "The object of his affection was ſo truly worthy, he had no wiſh to conceal his attachment to her. She builds not her claim," added he, "upon beauty, or on birth, but on the milder and far preferable charms of ſenſe, modeſty, and virtue."

Fanny's eyes filled with tears at this praiſe of her friend, ſo warm, ſo appropriate, and ſo exalting; yet in her joy for calling her her friend, ſhe forgot not that ſhe was gone, and that Cecil was going, and that herſelf was left expoſed to the cruelleſt injuries, with no counſellors to aſſiſt, no experienced friend to apply to. She looked on Cecil as a diſ-

interested

tereſted adviſer, of whoſe good wiſhes ſhe was ſure, and in whoſe judgment ſhe repoſed the greateſt confidence; but to loſe him and Lady Suſan together, was a blow ſhe felt in the moſt ſenſible manner.

Sir John Sinclair heard this intelligence with far different ſenſations; his long friendſhip for Lord Calſhot indeed gave him ſome uneaſineſs for his alarming ſituation; but the powerful deſires with which young Fanny had inſpired him, overpowered every claim of affection, and left him alive only to the obſtacles that retarded, or the events that facilitated his ſucceſs. Of this latter kind he looked upon the departure of Lady Suſan, and the conſequent journey of Cecil; their partiality to Fanny alarmed him; their penetration tortured him; and he never ſaw them approach without trembling for the downfall of his

hopes. Their abſence then was truly welcome to him, and doubly ſo at this moment, when he flattered himſelf he ſaw a tender partiality in the mild eyes of Fanny; her native gratitude ripening into love. No buſy intruders would now interfere with their prudent counſels; no ſagacious friends would now be at hand, to alarm her young heart, and daſh his long cheriſhed hopes in a moment. He ſhould have full leiſure, and glorious opportunity to ſteal away her ſoul by melting ſoftneſs, and to teach her to yield, before ſhe was alarmed by the name of love. But his cunning had already overſhot itſelf; the black conſpiracy he had laid had already awakened ſuſpicion in her innocent mind; and though ſhe feared nothing from him, ſhe had learnt to dread the cruel miſconſtructions of the world. The whiſper ſhe had overheard had ſtruck deep into her heart; and Sir John could he have foreſeen

foreſeen the journey of Lord Calſhot and his family, would not have been ſo precipitate in alarming her with the ſound of calumny. Far more gratifying to his paſſion would it have been, to have triumphed by love, than by the horror her loſs of character muſt inſpire; for the intereſting charms of Fanny had taught him a degree of love it was long ſince he had experienced.

A week had now elapſed, and ſhe heard nothing from Lady Suſan. A thouſand uncertain ideas floated acroſs her mind. She apprehended that poſſibly Lord Calſhot was detained on the road by increaſing illneſs; or that, even in caſe they were arrived at Bath, Lady Suſan was prevented writing by her neceſſary attendance on her father. She knew Cecil was gone, but was totally ignorant whether Lord de Grey had accompanied his family.

Another week now paſſed over, and yet ſhe heard not. She grew anxious and uneaſy. The idea of having loſt the friendſhip of Lady Suſan gave her a thouſand diſtreſſing alarms. She was evidently out of ſpirits, and would have been ſtill more depreſſed but for the kind and chearing notice of Sir John Sinclair.

As for Miſs Sinclair, ſhe had lately grown extremely intimate with Miſs Euſtace, and ſpent great part of her time with that young lady. Sir John in vain repreſented to his daughter that the world would attribute her frequent viſits to the ſiſter to an encreaſing partiality for the brother.—Auguſta ever averſe to controul, was not inclined to ſubmit; and Sir John experienced too much happineſs in enjoying by himſelf the company of his amiable Fanny, to be very ſolicitous about the propriety

priety of thoſe engagements which occupied his daughter. He knew that her fortune and beauty were ſufficient to cover any little blemiſhes ſhe might occaſionally incur, and contenting himſelf with remonſtrating, which ſhe careleſſly replied to, he gave himſelf up to the pleaſure of inſinuating himſelf into the heart of the poor unſuſpicious object of his lawleſs love.

At length letters arrived from Bath for Sir John, informing him of the ſafety of the family, and ſome ſmall amendment in the reaſon of Lord Calſhot.—Fanny's ſurprize and uneaſineſs redoubled at not hearing now from Lady Suſan. She knew not what to conjecture. Alas! ſhe would never have conjectured right. How was it poſſible for her to imagine that Sir John had intercepted a letter meant for her, in which her cautious friend had unfolded to her all her ſuſpi-

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cions relative to himſelf, informed her of all the malevolent whiſpers of the neighbourhood, and aſſured her of every exertion in her power to aſſiſt, and to ſave her. This letter was too precious not to determine the Baronet that Fanny ſhould neither write nor receive any letter but what paſſed through his hands.

Fanny's character, now every day developing, became every day more amiable. Her natural ſweetneſs and ſenſibility were united to a firmneſs and fortitude unuſual to her ſex;—her general benevolence was tempered by a juſt diſcrimination, and her ſoftneſs and docility rendered more captivating by an eaſy gaiety, which, however, the preſent anxiety too much repreſſed; yet her heart, though warm and impaſſioned, was unacquainted with the name of love, and ſhe was totally unconſcious of the ſentiment that ruled her boſom. Her

acquaintance

acquaintance with Lord de Grey had been of ſuch long ſtanding; her partiality for him ſo gradual, and ſo naturally founded on his virtues and pleaſing qualities, that ſhe who had never been taught that a tender paſſion was a neceſſary qualification, was not early in ſuſpecting its influence over her heart. Still leſs likely was ſhe to imagine that ſhe had any over him; ſince the ſame cauſes which blinded her, joined to an idea of her great inferiority in point of rank, had prevented a thought of love from entering into Lord de Grey's head. He knew indeed that ſhe was amiable, and he was conſcious that her indiſpoſition at the ball had alarmed him; but he ſuſpected that the great influence ſhe had on his heart, and the alarming ſituation of his father, had contributed to divert his mind from the remembrance of the fair Fanny. But this paſſion, hitherto ſo gentle and unnoticed, was of a nature

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to laſt as long as the heart it informed; it had grown gradually and unperceived, ſtrengthened by frequent meetings, and eaſy familiarity; and, like the concealed fire, which makes its way into the heart of a building undiſcovered, is too powerful when it burſts out to be extinguiſhed, this unſuſpected enemy had interwoven itſelf with every fibre, and the touch of death alone could deſtroy it.

Lord and Lady Calſhot, wealthy and ignorant, looked upon their ſon as one who "could beſtride this narrow world like a Coloſſus;" who had but to chooſe, and its honours, its pleaſures, its riches, were at his diſpoſal. Their early fondneſs had given Lord de Grey rather a high idea of his own conſequence; while the value he ſaw ſet on rank and title, gave it ſome weight in his eyes. Early prejudices form the habit of thinking,

and

and where is the being ſo perfect and ſo juſt, as in no inſtance to be ſwayed by early prejudice?

Three weeks had now elapſed ſince the departure of the Calſhot family, and Fanny's time paſſed very heavily. She regretted the ſweet friendſhip of Lady Suſan, and felt the more, as ſhe feared ſhe had wholly loſt it. She could not account for her ſilence; and, though ſhe thought the mind of her friend ſuperior to ficklenefs, ſhe yet dreaded ſome change, whoſe cauſe, enveloped in myſtery, ſhe might never be able to diſcover. She miſſed the ſoothing attention of Lord de Grey, and the agreeable ſociety of Cecil.

An occaſional viſit from Mr. Mordaunt was all that diſturbed the ſolitude of the lodge, for Miſs Sinclair was ſtill on a viſit to Miſs Euſtace, though this

was

was a circumſtance that Fanny rather rejoiced at than regretted; and Sir John, though pleaſed with her ſociety, and in love with her perſon, was too much a man of gaiety to immure himſelf wholly with a girl whom he hardly conſidered as above a child. He made frequent engagements with the neighbouring families, and Fanny paſſed the chief part of her time alone.

Had ſhe not had ſome ſubjects for uneaſy reflection, ſolitude would not have been irkſome to her, for her natural temper was gay, and her mind was cultivated; ſhe loved reading paſſionately, could enjoy a lonely walk, with a book in her hand, and when tired, even of this mental amuſement, found a relief from *ennui* and languor in the uſe of her needle. She often indeed trembled, when ſitting alone, in fear of another interruption from Gordon; for ſhe knew

not

not that this gentleman was now employed in paying his devoirs to Miſs Euſtace, while her brother was occupied in the ſame way with Auguſta.

Mr. Gordon had been really ſtruck with Fanny's beauty; and, looking on her as fair game, had made the attempt which was interrupted by Cecil. He had long been partly engaged to marry Miſs Euſtace, and determined now to compleat that buſineſs, that he might have leiſure to accompliſh his deſigns on Fanny, which he was far from abandoning on account of this engagement. He ſometimes indeed regretted that he had not firſt compleated the plan which moſt nearly intereſted his heart; but he had incautiouſly begun his ſerious addreſſes, and was now too far engaged to retract.

Fanny was ſitting by herſelf one morning on the ſopha, in her dreſſing-room,

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Sir John was gone for a ride, and ſhe had taken up a book, when a ring at the outer gate ſurpriſed her; but her ſurpriſe encreaſed to alarm, when ſhe heard a man's foot on the ſtairs. The horrid Gordon ruſhed inſtantly upon her mind, and ſhe flew, with an inſtantaneous motion, to the door, and bolted it; ſhe ſtood there trembling, and ſcarce daring to breathe, dreading every moment to hear his voice, and not knowing whether his rage might not lead him to burſt open the door, when her alarms were inſtantly diſſipated by hearing Sir John's voice aſking for admiſſion.

She gladly opened the door, and the ſudden change ſhe experienced from terror to ſecurity, tinged her cheeks with an animated glow, while her eyes ſparkled with unaffected pleaſure. She attributed the ſurpriſe, ſtill evident on her countenance, to the ſudden and unex-

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pected return of Sir John; and he, who saw that her emotion at seeing him was by no means an unpleasant one, was highly gratified by what he thought a fresh avowal of her tenderness.

"The morning," said he, "was not pleasant, and I could not bear to waste so much time in a foggy air, which could be so delightfully passed with you." Fanny's eyes spoke her thanks, and Sir John told her "He had just learnt a piece of intelligence, which was the approaching marriage of Mr. Gordon and Miss Eustace;" but he said not a word about Augusta's attachment to that lady's brother, nor indeed was it possible, for Clara Eustace was not more ready to publish to the world her approaching connexion with Mr. Gordon, a circumstance she was highly proud of, than Miss Sinclair was to conceal her's with Mr. Eustace; and the gentleman,

who

who knew, that though a presumptive heiress, she was not independent of her father, readily coincided in her plans of secrecy.

Sir John remarked that Fanny coloured at Mr. Gordon's name, that she was embarrassed, and knew not what to reply; the observation did not please him, and, determined to sift her heart to the the bottom, he said, "Gordon seemed highly charmed with you when he dined here, Fanny. I wonder, if he was, how he can have any relish for Miss Eustace." "I am sure," said Fanny warmly, "I wonder Miss Eustace can like him, for I think him very disagreeable;—he is so bold and impudent."

From many women this speech might not have proved their dislike to Mr. Gordon; but Sir John knew Fanny too guileless to have a doubt remaining.

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She added, "Miſs Euſtace is pretty, and ſeems amiable."—"She is very well," ſaid Sir John coldly; "but ſhe is affected and trifling; however I believe I am difficult; I ſeek for a Fanny in all the young women I ſee, and nothing is ſo rare to meet with; for where ſhall we find ſweetneſs blended with firmneſs, ſenſibility without affectation, and chearfulneſs without levity, but in you, my dear girl?"

Fanny, gratified by praiſe ſo peculiar, replied, "My dear Sir, your praiſe is rather calculated to teach me what I ought to be, than to deſcribe what I am; however, it ſhall be my ſtudy to form myſelf by the character you have ſo judiciouſly drawn."

After ſome more converſation on indifferent ſubjects, all productive of ſome warm teſtimony of applauſe to Fanny,

Sir John, taking her hand, ſaid, "And now, my love, this ſeems a favourable opportunity for talking of our own private affairs. No man's life is ſafe from ſudden accidents; and healthy as I ſeem at preſent, Lord Calſhot was no leſs ſo, previous to the dreadful attack which has deprived him of his reaſon. I have been endeavouring, therefore, to obviate the conſequence of ſuch an accident, (ſhould it happen) to you; and, while I conſider what more I can ſecure to you, I beg you will accept this paper," (giving her one) "which makes the Heathcote-farm your's for ever. The produce of this farm is at leaſt two hundred a year; and this, though not equal to my final intentions, will at leaſt ſecure you from poverty and dependence, in caſe I am ſuddenly taken from you; and in dependence on Auguſta I am by no means inclined to leave you."

Fanny

Fanny liſtened to this ſpeech, the tears running down her cheeks; then throwing herſelf on her knees before her benefactor, expreſſed her gratitude in the moſt affecting terms, while her heart glowed with indignant reproach to herſelf, at the idea ſhe had even harboured a ſuſpicion of ſo noble a being.

Sir John raiſed her from the ground, and again taking her hand, replied to her ardent gratitude, "Speak not ſo warmly of this trifle, my love, it is ſo far below your deſerts, that I bluſh to offer it; yet, at this moment I cannot offer more."—"More, Sir!" repeated the ſobbing Fanny, "Oh teach me to deſerve this; teach me ſome means by which I can make you amends for your goodneſs to me."—"My goodneſs, as you call it," replied Sir John, "would ceaſe to be ſuch, did I expect any return; yet there is a way."—"Oh, Sir,"

cried Fanny, her eyes ſparling with joy, "teach me but how I can ſerve and pleaſe you, and my life ſhall willingly be paſſed in the endeavour."

"Are you in earneſt?" aſked Sir John. "Put me to the proof," replied ſhe, "and ſee if there is any ſervice I am capable of, that I would not chearfully perform, be the taſk ever ſo difficult." "Nay, Fanny," reſumed Sir John, "it is not difficult, if you love me. Do you love me?"—"Oh, Sir," anſwered Fanny, bluſhing, "your bounty ſecures my gratitude, but your goodneſs, your delicacy, claims my warmeſt affection and veneration."

The veneration Sir John, at that moment, found rather embarraſſing to his purpoſe; he therefore replied, "But all veneration is a conſtraint; and I would wiſh you to love me freely and without reſerve;

reſerve; lay aſide all conſtraint, with me, fair Fanny, and believe that no one is more earneſtly your well-wiſher than myſelf."

Fanny, impatient to know the means by which ſhe was to ſhew her gratitude more ſubſtantially than by proteſtations, again entreated Sir John to inform her of his wiſhes. "No," ſaid he, "my love, we will ſay no more at preſent; it is merely a proof of your affection for me that I want, and another time—" "Oh, Sir, this moment," cried Fanny, ſoftened by his kindneſs, and eager to prove her readineſs. "Then," cried Sir John, gazing a moment on her glowing cheeks and covering her face, neck, and hands, with ardent kiſſes, "then let this fervour teach you to make a fit return. Yes, beautiful Fanny, it is your love I require; the poſſeſſion of that lovely form is all I wiſh."

Fanny, wholly thrown off her guard by the artful kindneſs of Sir John, was totally unprepared for the blow which had ſo often been uppermoſt in her thoughts; ſhe covered her face with both hands, which ſhe withdrew from the graſp of Sir John, and ſuffered him to ſpeak without interruption. She ſhed not a tear, but endeavoured to collect ſufficient firmneſs to ſupport the ſcene. When he ceaſed, after a volley of ardent proteſtations of his endleſs love, and ſued for her prompt and favourable deciſion, ſhe uncovered her face, in which the ſweet expreſſion of affectionate gratitude had given way to the glow of virtuous indignation; ſhe took the paper, and, tearing it into a thouſand pieces, "Thus," ſaid ſhe, "periſh every remembrance of this hour: forget it, Sir John, if indeed you are in earneſt, and mean any thing more than a trial of my ſtrength."

ſtrength."—"By Heavens I never was more in earneſt," he replied.—"Then," ſaid ſhe, "low as I am in the world, I have not deſerved this humiliation. Go, Sir, I beſeech you leave me."

Sir John, who expected not an immediate acquieſcence, was ſatisfied with her calmneſs, and ſaid, "He would leave her to deliberate on his propoſal;" and, drawing another paper from his pocket, "there," ſaid he, "is a paper that may perhaps aſſiſt your reflections." He laid a letter on the table, and, bowing, quitted the room.

Fanny, ſtruck with horror, remained immo vable; ſhe ſeemed deprived even of all power to deliberate. No friend was near her to counſel her how to act in this deſperate emergency; and though ſhe needed no counſel to determine her to reject all the offers of ſo cruel a liber-

tine, ſhe yet wiſhed for ſome prudent and friendly boſom in which to repoſe the weight of her cares, which ſeemed too heavy for her feeble reſolution. Her firſt idea was to quit Sir John inſtantly; yet where to go?—whither could ſhe bend her ſteps where equal ignominy would not await her? A runaway! it was a ſhocking name! yet to ſtay would be madneſs; and, after a few moments, ſhe roſe haſtily, and advanced to the door; it was locked, and the key was gone; for Sir John, apprehending ſhe would endeavour to eſcape, had taken that precaution. She went to the window, determining at any riſk to leap to the ground, when ſhe beheld her perſecutor walking backwards and forwards ſlowly before it. She ſhuddered at the ſight of him, and haſtily retreated, leſt he ſhould caſt his eyes up to the window of her apartment. Forced now to remain, ſhe determined to effect her eſcape at night,

night, at all hazards, and walked up and down with infinite agitation.

"Oh, cruel certainty!" exclaimed ſhe, "and am I then forced to believe, on ſuch ſoul-harrowing proofs, the guilt of him I have ſo long venerated as my benefactor? And was it to ruin, to deſtroy the unſuſpecting wretch, that he cheriſhed the forlorn orphan, and ſoothed her ſoul to hope and peace? Alas! Alas! and thoſe malignant whiſpers, have, perhaps, already ſtamped my character with eternal infamy! Never, perhaps, will real innocence, and conſtant prudence, reſtore my name to ſpotleſs honour! Oh, cruel! Yet let us ſee by what arguments he can gloſs over his villainous propoſal."

She ſeated herſelf once more on the ſopha, and, taking the letter, with a

trembling hand unfolded it, and read as follows:

" Not lightly, nor without due reflec-
" tion, have I ventured to make a pro-
" poſal, which I know at firſt will rouſe
" your virtuous indignation. I am pre-
" pared to meet your anger, and to diſ-
" arm it, by the united force of reaſon
" and love. I truſt that when you have
" heard the various motives which ought
" to lead you to compliance, you will
" lay aſide your becoming baſhfulneſs,
" and ſuffer it to give place to that
" melting tenderneſs ſo natural to your
" character, and which would endear
" you to me for ever.

" Let me now argue with you, my
" lovely Fanny, coolly and diſpaſſionate-
" ly; I mean not to dwell on the warmth
" of that affection I feel for you; I
" mean

" mean not to point out the tenderneſs,
" the paſſion, with which I ſhould take
" to my boſom the loveliеſt of her ſex;
" nor the readineſs with which, for her
" ſake, I would relinquiſh every tie of
" that nature by which I am at preſent
" bound. I mean only to dwell on the
" motives which perſonally intereſt you,
" and the reaſons which ought to deter-
" mine you to heſitate no longer.

" Be not angry, ſweet girl, at the
" plainneſs of my expreſſions, nor think
" I mean to reproach you with my paſt
" benefactions, when I tell you, that
" but for me you would have been a
" beggar. If you accept my propoſals,
" affluence and independence await you.
" I ſhall not ſtop at the donation of the
" Heathcote-farm; I mean to make you
" uncontroled miſtreſs of 500l. a year
" for your life; add to this, the tender,
" the abſolute *devoirs* I ſhall ever pay

" you, that you ſhall need only to form
" a wiſh to have it gratified.

" Remember alſo, that you are abſo-
" lutely in my power; that I am maſter
" here, and am unuſed to have my will
" thwarted; that I am determined to be
" gratified in this point; and that either
" with, or without your conſent, this
" night leads me to your chamber, and
" gives me poſſeſſion of all your charms;
" the difference to you will be in the
" conſequence; if you willingly accede
" to my propoſition, love and afflu-
" ence await you; if you refuſe your
" conſent, and oblige me to make uſe
" of man's worſt prerogative, ſtrength
" and power, I conſider myſelf abſolved
" from all future ſupport of you; and
" when my paſſion is gratified, which it
" would ſoon be with an unwilling vic-
" tim, I ſhall turn you out to beggary
" and infamy;—forced to ſeek from the

poor

" poor remains of your beauty, the
" bread to ſupport a miſerable, and diſ-
" eaſed exiſtence.

" Add to theſe, a ſtill ſtronger reaſon,
" which is, the infamy already fixed
" upon your character. I have ever
" been a ſlave to the power of beauty,
" and it was impoſſible I ſhould cheriſh
" ſo lovely a creature as you but for one
" end, the gratification of thoſe appe-
" tites I have ever indulged. Every
" one therefore looks on you as even
" now my miſtreſs; and I am well
" pleaſed to encourage a report which
" ought to induce you to ſeek in my
" arms a ſupport, this ſtigma will pre-
" vent your gaining in any more ho-
" nourable way.

" Such then, Fanny, are the unanſwer-
" able arguments I have brought, to in-
" duce you to accept freely of my pro-
poſal.

" posal. The certainty of being at last
" obliged to submit, with affluence on
" the one hand, and beggary on the
" other, with the infamy already affixed
" on your character, and which no
" subsequent prudence can wash of.

" I have not dwelt on the argument I
" should most wish to weigh with you,
" the tender passion I feel for you; and
" the constancy and firmness your so ge-
" nerous return would give to it. I will
" call in two hours for the result of your
" deliberations, and remember, at all
" events, you are mine this night.

" Your devoted lover,

" JOHN SINCLAIR."

Fanny, well aware of her danger, gave way to no womanish complaints; she exerted her fortitude, and repressed her tears,

tears, giving her whole ſoul to delibe-
ration. She was unmoved by his argu-
ments, though reduced to deſpair at
the idea of undeſerved infamy; ſhe
found it impoſſible to eſcape before
night; and at night, how horribly was
ſhe to be prevented. She found from
his letter how fully he was determined
on ſucceſs, and ſhe could think of one
only way to gain time, though that her
ſoul abhorred, and that was by tempo-
rizing. She took up her pen, begun a
hundred billets, but could not ſatisfy
herſelf; ſhe determined therefore, dread-
ful as it was, to ſee Sir John at the end
of the two hours, and, by deceiving
him with falſe hopes, endeavour to gain
four-and-twenty hours reſpite.

She walked with a perturbed ſtep about
the room; ſhe beheld from the window
Sir John walking, as agitated, on the
lawn, frequently looking at his watch,

as

as if he wiſhed the time away. Her ſuſpence now grew inſupportable, and ſhe herſelf wiſhed the moment arrived; yet as ſhe was uncertain whether he would conſent to let her remain in ſolitude for the reſt of the day, ſhe could not ſhew herſelf at the window as a ſignal that ſhe was ready; though, in her preſent frame of mind, ſhe was totally incapable of forming any plan for her future conduct, if ſhe could ſucceed in eſcaping. At length the two hours were at an end, and, ardently as ſhe had wiſhed the time away, now the moment was come, ſhe trembled, and would fain have ſet it at a greater diſtance.

Not ſuch were the feelings of Sir John; he ran haſtily up ſtairs, and, without knocking at the door, burſt eagerly into the room. He gazed for a moment at her agitated countenance; he thought it ſpoke no favourable omen to his wiſhes;

wiſhes; he turned aſide with viſible diſappointment; rage was in his looks, but he reſtrained it ſo far as to ſay calmly to Fanny, "Am I to owe the happineſs of this night to my power, or your conſent?"

Fanny forced a reluctant ſmile. Sir John beheld it ſtruggling on her lips, and, eagerly kiſſing her, exclaimed, with a violence that frightened her, "By Heaven ſhe conſents! Loveliеſt of women, ſpeak the enchanting word!"

Poor Fanny, trembling with inward horror, ſhuddering at her hypocriſy, and doubtful of her ſucceſs, put her hand into Sir John's, and faintly ſaid, "Till to-morrow!"

"I underſtand you, my faireſt," replied the ardent Baronet; "be it then,

ſince

ſince you wiſh it, deferred till to-morrow; yet I could have been better pleaſed to have had no delay; but the difference of a day ſhall make no quarrel with the angel who will, I truſt, bleſs the whole of my life."

Fanny roſe in evident perturbation, and Sir John ſaid, "I ſee and reſpect your delicate agitation; I will leave you till dinner-time, and in the evening I purpoſe ſhewing you your eſtate, Heathcote-farm; you will have no objection to accompanying me in the phæton?"

Fanny ſmiled her conſent; her emotion was too great to truſt herſelf to ſpeak; and Sir John, riſing, after a few fervent kiſſes, retired, and left her at liberty to meditate. Still, however, he ſecured her perſon, for again he took the key of the door.

But

But though ſhe had gained the deſired reſpite, Fanny found herſelf incapable of reflection. The chaos in her mind rendered contemplation impoſſible;—and, indeed, thought ſhe, what plan can I form, who am ſo totally ignorant of the world, its modes and prejudices? All I can reſolve on is to eſcape, and truſt to that Providence who aſſiſts me in my purpoſe, for the future deſtination of my life.

Unable to arrange her dreſs, Fanny appeared at dinner in the diſhabille of the morning, but ſhe looked eminently lovely; the wan paleneſs of her cheeks was every moment ſucceeded by a varying and delicate bluſh, which again gave place to an intereſting whiteneſs. To eat was impoſſible, nor did her endeavours to ſeem eaſy ſucceed. Sir John, however, loved her the more for her evident emotion, and, flattering himſelf her tenderneſs

derneſs for him was the ſole cauſe of her compliance and agitation, was in high ſpirits, and extreme good humour.

After dinner the phæton was ordered, and Fanny was reluctantly ſeated beſide her lover, whoſe gallantry was painful, and whoſe proteſtations and thanks overwhelmed her with confuſion.

The road to the Heathcote-farm Fanny was totally unacquainted with. It lay thro' a beautiful country, interſperſed with woods; but her mind was too ill at eaſe to ſuffer her to remark the way they went, it was more diſtant than ſhe was aware of. They continued their journey till the ſun was hiding his glorious head in the weſt, and new fears began to ſeize her boſom. The damps of the evening fell chill around her, and Sir John hinted the impoſſibility of returning.

ing. Fanny ſhuddered, and ſaid, "We muſt return."

The idea of being conveyed to that lone cottage, at ſuch a criſis, was infinitely worſe than a long journey in the phæton at night. In ſuch a ſolitude, what was to become of her? "We muſt return," ſaid Fanny, earneſtly.

"We ſhall not return," replied Sir John. "Dame Mumford is appriſed of our arrival, and will be prepared for our reception." Fanny's heart ſunk within her, and ſhe was unable to utter a word.

At length they reached a ſmall white cottage, where they ſtopped, and Sir John lifted her from the phæton, for, benumbed with cold, and trembling with fright, ſhe was incapable of any exertion. He led her into a ſmall room, very elegantly furniſhed with ſophas, a French

bed,

bed, and every article of modern luxury. "I have been endeavouring," ſaid he, "to render this houſe worthy of its miſtreſs;" then, ringing the bell, he called for Dame Mumford.

Never did the female form exhibit a more diſguſting appearance than in Dame Mumford. Of an enormous ſize, her ample cheſt was unconfined by ſtays, and the few cloaths that covered her were dirty and horrid; her face was crimſoned with the effects of liquor, and her leering eyes ſpoke a language dreadful to the ſoul of Fanny.

She came in curtſying to her company, and enquired, in a fawning voice, what his Honour would pleaſe to have.

"Shew this lady the chambers," ſaid Sir John; and bid them prepare tea.—You have got ſomething for ſupper, and ſome wine?" "Oh,

"Oh yes, your Honour; I knowed your Honour was coming, and I have got a nice chicken, and ſome of your Honour's favourite wine."

She now conducted the miſerable Fanny up ſtairs, into a large and elegant bed-room, ſaying, "This is his Honour's chamber, Madam. Lord, Madam, what a ſweet gentleman his Honour is! ſo good! and ſo haffable! and ſo generous!"—"And where is another room," ſaid Fanny, "if we are to ſtay here?"—"Another! Oh, laws, Mame! we have no other room but mine. His Honour never wants but one room when he comes here, Mame," with a leer that ſpoke but too plainly her horrid meaning.

She felt, in a moment, the neceſſity of deceiving this wretch, who was doubtleſs ordered to be watchful of the poor creatures

creatures brought to this horrid place. She doubted not but the cottage had more than once been uſed for the deſtruction of innocence, and Dame Mumford looked a hardened inſtrument of vice. She therefore ſaid, as calmly as poſſible, "Will you be ſo good as to leave me a minute or two?"

"Lord, Madam," ſaid the old wretch, "why you ar'nt a going to ſtay up ſtairs from his Honour?"

"No, no;" ſaid Fanny, I ſhall be down in a minute; I ſhall find the parlour."

Dame Mumford was deceived; but the watchful Argus went no further than the door, though ſhe thought, mayhap the young lady was already reconciled. She left the room, however, and Fanny, who found her doom was ſealed, knew

ſhe

ſhe had no time to loſe; and therefore, haſtily prying about the room, found a ſmall window, in a cloſet, which looked backwards, and from which ſhe reſolved at all events to jump; but thinking ſhe ſhould have more opportunity at the hour of retiring, as ſhe knew Dame Mumford was now on the watch, ſhe returned in a few minutes to the parlour.

The old woman conducted her to the door, and ſhe was met by Sir John, who, kiſſing her, ſaid, "My Fanny ſees the neceſſity ſhe is under of waving the promiſed delay, as it is impoſſible to return to Sinclair-lodge to-night."

Dear as it coſt her, and new as it was, Fanny determined to diſſemble; ſhe therefore ſtrove to compoſe her voice and features, and Sir John believed ſhe was diſpoſed to conſent with a good grace.

Unpractiſed in the ways of men, and unlearned in the ſtratagems uſed on ſuch occaſions, it was her total want of appetite, and not her caution, that kept her from taſting either the chicken or the wine; the not eating afforded her a ſufficient reaſon for not drinking, and Sir John was ſo much deceived by her aſſumed compoſure, that he forbore preſſing her to ſwallow the ſoporific draught.

As the night advanced, her agitation increaſed, but the neceſſity there was for exertion, prevented her from giving way to her terror. At length Sir John, riſing, offered to conduct her up ſtairs, but ſhe inſiſted that he ſhould ſtay below till ſhe gave the ſignal. — Anxious, and half doubting, he was about to refuſe, when Dame Mumford entered the room, and whiſpered ſomething in his ear. He evidently changed countenance, and deſired Fanny to go up ſtairs, ſaying, he would

ſoon

ſoon follow; and left the cottage with Dame Mumford.

Fanny, with a beating heart, entered the chamber, uncertain which way they were gone; ſhe trembled leſt ſhe ſhould throw herſelf in their way; ſhe went to the cloſet-window, and liſtening, plainly heard footſteps. In agonies of deſpair ſhe re-entered the bed-room, when a pretty young girl opened her door, ſaying, "Madam, Madam!"

Fanny bid her come in, and the young woman ſaid, "Ah, Madam! I ſee your goodneſs in your looks! Oh, Madam, you have no time to loſe; take me with you, and I will deliver you."

Fanny ſtopped not to conſider;—nothing could be worſe than the ſituation ſhe was in, and, eagerly ſeizing the girl's hand, ſhe followed her lightly

down ſtairs. They went down into the cellar, from whence they mounted a ladder, and creeping out at a ſmall window uſed for the purpoſe of laying in coals, were immediately in the open air. Fear lent wings to their feet; the ſtranger was the guide, and Fanny followed, breathleſs with alarm and ſpeed. At length they reached a wood, and the girl, following a ſmall path, relaxed her ſpeed, and, turning to Fanny, ſaid, "Now, Madam, we are ſafe."

"Oh, ſtop not, ſtop not!" cried Fanny, "till we have reached an aſylum."

Still they ran on till they came to another cottage; the girl paſſed it; Fanny called to her. "No, no;" ſaid ſhe, and they purſued their courſe. "A tenant of Sir John's lives there," ſaid the girl. At length the wood ended, and they found themſelves on the turnpike-road,

road. They now ſlackened their pace, and the girl, turning to Fanny, ſaid, "Oh, Madam, how bleſſed am I to have ſaved you! You know not what you have eſcaped!" Fanny could hardly ſpeak, but ſhe preſſed the hand of her fair conductreſs, and wept plentifully.

"I loved you," ſaid the girl, "as ſoon as I ſaw you, and I determined, if I could, to get to ſpeak to you; but I could not, if it had not been for that bleſſed Gordon;—I always hated him before."

"What of him?" aſked Fanny.

"Oh, Madam, why he and Sir John keep the cottage between them, for the purpoſe of deluding poor girls there, and he juſt ſent word to Dame Mumford, that he was a coming; and we

thought he was safe enough, as he was going to marry Miss Eustace; and so Dame Mumford and Sir John went out, to contrive to send him away, for Sir John don't like to affront him, as Sir John owes him a mint of money."

"And tell me, my dear girl," said Fanny, "who it is that has so much obliged me?"

"Oh, Madam, don't ask me who I am, for I am hateful to myself, and to all good people; but I am not so abandoned, Ma'am, as not to wish to keep others from my own fate.—Indeed, indeed, I am very miserable."

"Poor girl," said Fanny, "were it in my power thou should'st be miserable no longer. I will not ask now for thy tale of woe, some other time."

"Yes,

"Yes, Madam, indeed I will tell you all, for I believe you are very good and compaſſionate; and indeed, if you will let me ſtay and wait upon you, I will be very good all my life."

"My dear child," ſaid Fanny, "I am myſelf poor, and uncertain of my fate; but never will I forget your claims on my gratitude and affection."

They now came to a diviſion in the roads, and the girl, who knew the country better than Fanny, propoſed quitting the great path, and ſtriking off to a village at ſome diſtance; for, as ſhe obſerved, Sir John would firſt ſeek them on the road to London. Fanny agreed, and they went forward to the village

A ſign of a King's-head announced a houſe of entertainment, and the poor travellers being much tired, and ſeeing

yet ſome ſtragglers up in the inn, deſired a bed-room, and retired to compoſe their ſcattered ſpirits. But in vain they tried to ſleep, agitation prevented their cloſing their eyes, and Fanny perceiving, by the frequent ſobs of her companion, that ſhe was as reſtleſs as herſelf, propoſed to her to take the preſent moment to relate her ſtory.

"My name, Madam," ſaid the poor girl, "is Mary Curtis; I was in the Aſylum, when Mrs. Mumford came there to ſee for a ſervant. She liked my looks, and talked to me a great deal; ſhe told me I ſhould live in the country, and have very little to do; and ſeemed ſo pleaſed with me that I was glad to think of going to ſerve her, and to get away from the Aſylum, where they made us work very hard; but I am ſure I had no notion of what ſhe wanted me for, for I would rather have worked ever ſo

hard,

hard, than have come here, had I known what I was intended for. Well, Madam, ſhe ſaid ſhe liked me very well, but ſhe would conſult a friend and come again; and ſo, two days after, ſhe came, and Sir John with her; and he ſpoke to me very pretty and good-humoured, and they brought me away with them. I was then thirteen years old, Madam, and—and—and—"

Here the poor girl burſt out a crying, and, after ſome minutes, ſaid, "Oh dear, Ma'am, indeed I could not help it, nor can I hardly tell how, but by the time I was fourteen, both Sir John and Colonel Gordon became my maſters;—and indeed I was very unhappy, for it went ſadly againſt me to do as they ordered me. At firſt Dame Mumford behaved very well to me, but after her two maſters had got the better of me, ſhe grew very croſs, and all together it almoſt broke my heart. She

called me ſuch terrible names; to be ſure Ma'am, I deſerved them for my behaviour, but I did not deſerve them for my heart; and ſo, Ma'am I won't talk any more about myſelf, but tell you what happened about a year ago.

"One night Sir John came here, and brought with him a very pretty lady, not ſo pretty as you, Ma'am, but ſhe was very pretty, and ſhe cried, and took on ſo, it quite grieved one's heart to ſee her; and ſo Dame Mumford took her up ſtairs, and talked to her, and ſaid how good Sir John would be to her, but ſhe could not pacify her; and ſo ſhe ſent me to talk to her a little; and the poor dear lady was ſo unhappy, and talked ſo pretty to me, it made my heart weep for her. At laſt we tried to get away together, but Sir John happened to ſee us, and he came and ſtopped our flight, and I was directly ſhut up in a dark

dark cloſet, with only bread and water, for four days; and when I came out Dame Mumford treated me very cruelly, and ſent me to ſee if the lady wanted any thing; poor thing! how altered ſhe was! She was as thin and as pale as if ſhe had eat nothing all the time; and her cloaths hung about her ſo ſadly! ſhe was the picture of deſpair.—She cried when ſhe ſaw me, and kiſſed me, calling me her poor dear Mary. I lamented to ſee her ſo ill; but ſhe ſaid, "No, Mary, do not lament, you ought to rejoice that I ſhall not long ſurvive my diſhonour; but promiſe me, my dear child, that if you have an opportunity to ſave any body elſe from my deſtruction, you will not let your preſent diſappointment diſcourage you." I promiſed her all ſhe deſired, and, poor thing! ſhe lived on a month longer. Sir John came to ſee her but ſeldom, and that, ſhe ſaid, did her good; for he told Dame Mumford

he did not like ſuch crying girls. Well, Ma'am, one night comes Colonel Gordon alone, and inſiſted on being ſhewn up to the lady. Poor ſoul! I was with her, and when ſhe heard a man's foot, ſhe ſaid, "There's Sir John, is it not?" and I ſaid, "No, Ma'am, it is Colonel Gordon;" and at that inſtant in he came, and when he begun to talk to her ſhe grew quite deſpairing, and fell into fainting fits and convulſions, and ſo he was forced to leave her; and he wanted to take me away from her, for he ſaid, "I was too young to be in the way of fits;" but I knew what he wanted me for, and I would not go; ſo I ſtaid with the poor lady till ſhe died, which was in the ſame night, and the next day Dame Mumford whipt me, becauſe I diſobeyed Colonel Gordon, and ſhe was the laſt we had to ſtay. They ſometimes brought women with them for a night, but never any that was told they were to be miſ-

treſs, as that lady was, and as you was, Ma'am;—and ſo, Madam, when you came, I remembered my promiſe to poor Miſs Charlton, and yet, at firſt, I could not get at the ſight of you, and Dame Mumford told me, you was very well reconciled; but I was reſolved to try, and I am very happy I did ſo."

"And how old are you now?" aſked Fanny. "I am but juſt turned of fifteen," replied the girl."

Fanny dropped a tear at her ſimple ſtory, and as they were ſtill unable to ſleep, Fanny propoſed purſuing their journey to ſome place ſtill more remote from the great London road; and deſiring to know if any returned chaiſe was going to leave the inn, they heard of one which was to ſet off in half an hour, to go to a village ſixteen miles off, croſs country road.

It was immaterial to the two fugitives where they went, provided they returned not to Sinclair-lodge; ſo they accepted the propoſal, and, ordering a breakfaſt, paid their little bill, and ſet out in half an hour.

As they went along, Fanny opened ſome part of her little hiſtory to her young companion, whoſe ſimplicity intereſted her much; and aſſuring her, if ever ſhe was in a ſituation to put it in her power, ſhe would ſend for her to wait on her, they agreed to ſeek for a country ſervice for poor Mary, while Fanny propoſed going to London, to try to get ſome employment, and to ſcreen herſelf from the purſuit Sir John would probably make after her.

They reached the town of ——— by ten o'clock in the morning, and alighting at the inn, enquired what ſtages

paſſed

paſſed through; the man ſaid the London ſtage would go by about five in the afternoon, and they reſolved to employ the intermediate time in ſeeking how to diſpoſe of Mary. An accident happened which placed her in a very eligible ſituation. A girl, who had the care of two children, was croſſing the ſtreet, juſt as a drunken man on horſeback came furiouſly galloping along; the children were following, but Fanny and Mary caught each hold of one, and ſaved them from the fate of their careleſs maid, who was thrown down, and her leg and two ribs broken.

The children ſcreamed exceſſively, and while they tried to pacify them, an old woman ran out of a ſhop to take up the girl, ſaying to the two travellers, "For God's ſake carry whuam the bearns!"—"Where do you live, my pretty dear?" ſaid Fanny. "I will ſhew you the way,"

ſaid

ſaid the boy ſhe held by the hand, a fine boy of three years old.

"Do, God bleſs you, dear lady," ſaid the old woman, "ſee him ſaaf whoam. Madam Morland will be ſo obliged; and tell her the poor girl is ſaaf with ould Dame Norton."

Fanny took hold of the boy, while Mary led a little girl, a year younger, and they proceeded along a pleaſant lane, and over two or three fields, till they reached a ſmall white houſe, ſtanding very ſweetly on the ſide of a gentle eminence; the children ran in, and told their mama of the ſad accident that had befallen poor Nanny.

Mrs. Moreland immediately invited in the two travellers, and expreſſed her obligations to them in the genteeleſt terms. She was a pretty, elegant woman,

of

of about four-and-twenty; her manners were polite and engaging, and Fanny gracefully accepted her invitation to dine.

If Fanny was pleaſed with her hoſteſs, Mrs. Moreland was no leſs pleaſed with her new gueſt. A prepoſſeſſion in Fanny's favour conquered the ſcruples that aroſe from the ſingularity of her ſituation. Nothing indeed could be further from Mrs. Moreland than illiberal ſuſpicions; and if ſhe viewed with ſurpriſe a female ſo eminently beautiful, whoſe air, dreſs, and manners, evinced the gentlewoman, apparently a friendleſs and unprotected fugitive, it was untinctured by one ſurmiſe to the prejudice of her gueſt, or to the diſcredit of her own innocent heart.

Fanny, charmed by ſo winning a confidence, and delighted with her hoſteſs, gave her a brief account of the woes

which

which had driven her, at ſo early an age, to ſeek refuge in an inhoſpitable world from thoſe friends who had hitherto protected her. She concealed the name of her perſecutor, and concluded with expatiating on her obligation to Mary, and her wiſh to ſee her decently provided for.

Mrs. Moreland met her wiſh, by immediately offering to Mary the place of the girl who had been diſabled in her ſight; and, though Mary was grieved to part from Fanny, yet, convinced of her inability to ſupport her, ſhe gratefully accepted Mrs. Moreland's offer.

This point ſettled, Fanny returned, with her fair hoſteſs, to the drawing-room, and they were already not merely acquainted, but friends; a ſecret ſympathy ſeemed to unite their ſouls, and Fanny felt a delight ſhe had not experienced

enced ſince her ſeparation from Lady Suſan de Grey.

Mrs. Moreland, taking her hand ſaid, "You cannot imagine how much it grieves me that I am not able to offer an aſylum under my own roof, to one who ſo warmly intereſts my feelings; but that is a point I am not miſtreſs of. Highly indeed would it gratify me to poſſeſs a companion ſo formed for ſociety, and I ſhall not eaſily get over the regret this circumſtance occaſions me.

While ſhe ſpoke, Fanny was contemplating the fair ſpeaker. Mrs. Moreland was very fair, and rather pale; her hair was a light auburn, her features ſmall and delicate, and her ſlender figure bore evident marks of ill health and fragility; but ſtill more intereſting than her form and face, was a ſoft melancholy which clouded

clouded her lovely features as ſhe continued.

"While I look forward with hope to the period when my Anna ſhall be my companion, I bleſs the God who has not in his juſtice, deprived me of every comfort."

Fanny's ſurpriſe was great, but ſhe forbore aſking any queſtions, as Mrs. Moreland, evidently checking herſelf, added, "But what I can I will do for you; I have a brother, the only one of a numerous family who now takes any notice of me; he is all goodneſs; he is married unworthily of himſelf, but his wife is a good ſort of woman to him. I will give you a letter, and I am ſure he will receive you into his houſe, and ſeek for a ſituation which may ſuit your inclinations. To live with them would ill accord

accord with your feelings, my gentle friend, but to conſider it as a home, as a refuge—"—"Oh, Madam," interrupted Fanny, "you are too good, to intereſt yourſelf ſo much about an unhappy orphan."

Mrs. Moreland would not offer Fanny a reſidence in her own houſe, but ſhe could, and did invite her to ſtay till the Friday, the third day following from thence, and Fanny gladly accepted a propoſal ſo agreeable to her wiſhes.—Her new friend made her ſeveral preſents, which were uſeful to her, as ſhe had left the lodge without any thing but what ſhe had then on. The three days paſſed in harmony and friendſhip, in that ſympathetic confidence which elevated ſouls only can comprehend, and Fanny learnt from her friend the little hiſtory of her ſorrows.—She had been left heireſs to an uncle's fortune, which was a very

very large one, and as ſoon as ſhe arrived at the age of eighteen, came into uncontroled poſſeſſion of it. Young, amiable, rich, and beautiful, Miſs Wigſtead could not want for admirers, but her perverſe heart attached itſelf in preference to Mr. Moreland, a man of forty-five, or perhaps fifty, of ſmooth addreſs, but without one other qualification. She had rejected for him a rich and amiable youth who adored her, without any eye to her fortune, while her guineas were Mr. Moreland's ſole incentives. He was a lawyer, poor and rapacious; the liberal men of his profeſſion dignified him by the name of pettifogger; and though his manner was ſmooth, and his temper unruffled, it was a deceitful and provoking calmneſs. Her beauty, her tenderneſs, could never move him to love; her requeſts were uniformly denied with the ſame ſoft civility, but unwavering ſtedfaſtneſs, and the

lovely

lovely woman found herſelf neglected, ſhut out from ſociety by the character, and deprived of a friend by the will of her huſband; denied all enjoyments, and yoked for ever to a man her unbiaſſed judgment taught her not only to deſpiſe, but to diſlike.

Fanny gave the tendereſt pity to her new friend's ſorrow, and ſaw with pain the hour when ſhe muſt leave her; but Mr. Moreland was expected, and Mrs. Moreland was obliged to conceal from him the indulgence chance had thrown in her way.

After many tears and embraces, with a heavy heart Fanny quitted Mrs. Moreland's houſe, and followed by Mary, who would ſee her ſafe to the ſtage, reached the town juſt as the coach arrived; there was fortunately a place; ſhe jumped in, and was ſpeedily conveyed from the habitation of her friend.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

FANNY was so much taken up with her own emotions, that she entered the stage without taking much notice of her fellow-passengers; she made a slight bow to the civility of the person, who, by placing himself on the opposite side, left her a corner on the front seat, and withdrawing as much as possible from their observation, she endeavoured to stifle her emotions. She had just parted from a friend, to whom both esteem and sympathy strongly attracted her; she had quitted her without a hope of seeing her again, for Mrs. Moreland had told her she never visited London, and she even had no hope of hearing from her; for, in answer to her request of a letter, Mrs. Moreland had replied, "I sometimes write

write to my brother, but if any very great event happens I will certainly endeavour to write to you." Her reflections on this ſubject were not the moſt pleaſing, but when from theſe ſhe adverted to the occaſion which had thus driven her out into the world, in a ſituation the moſt perilous imaginable, ſhe trembled for her future fate. Young, inexperienced, beautiful, poor, and friendleſs, ſhe felt herſelf environed by dangers, and ſhe was reduced to ſeek protection from the liberality of ſtrangers.

From the hardſhips of her ſituation, her thoughts recurred to her former enjoyments, and with all of theſe the Calſhot family were intimately connected. The friendſhip of Lady Suſan had been her principal bleſſing, but for many weeks ſhe had been in a total uncertainty about the whole of that family; and the avowed intereſt ſhe took in Lady

Sufan's partiality, added to one no lefs ſtrong, though yet concealed even to her own unconſcious heart, that ſhe felt alſo for Lord de Grey, whoſe polite attentions had given her inconceivable pleaſure, convinced her that the miſconduct of Sir John Sinclair was only one of her misfortunes. In vain ſhe revolved in her mind all poſſible cauſes for Lady Sufan's neglect, ſhe could only attribute the total ceſſation of her friendſhip to ſome prejudice ſhe had imbibed againſt her, which, however unfounded it might be, operated equally in her disfavour. To herſelf ſhe avowed only the regret for Lady Sufan's friendſhip, but her heart involuntarily joined the brother in her ſighs, and, forgetting ſhe was not alone, the tears fell faſt from her eyes.

"By God," exclaimed her oppoſite neighbour, whoſe civility had placed her on the front ſeat, "you are too pretty

to

to be unhappy. What, girl, haſt' met with ſome hard gale already? D——— my eyes, but I'll help thee to the uttermoſt of my power."

At this apoſtrophe Fanny lifted her eyes to the perſon who had made it. She beheld an athletic figure, in the uniform of a naval lieutenant; his age appeared to be upwards of fifty, and his dreſs bore the evident marks of poverty. The wind and weather had ſtrongly marked his face; it bore an indiſputable witneſs to the goodneſs and humanity of his heart, and a fluſh of honeſt warmth roſe to his embrowned cheek, as he gazed on the fair face of the weeping Fanny.

She was going to ſpeak, when a ſhrill female voice from the other front corner prevented her;—her neareſt neighbour, a fat, vulgar woman, had hitherto obſtructed her view of the perſon who

ſpoke now, and who, from the authoritative manner in which ſhe addreſſed the lieutenant, Fanny concluded to be his wife.

"Why, od's my life, Harry," ſaid his fair helpmate, "I dare ſay the lady wants none of your help," (glancing a look at Fanny's elegant dreſs) "but you're always ſo free of your offers, when, to be ſure, you might as well keep your gettings for your own fleſh and blood."

Fanny now entirely changed the mode of her thanks, which the honeſt lieutenant's hearty good will would have drawn from her with more confidence, and bowing, only ſaid, "She was much obliged to the gentleman, but ſhe really wanted no aſſiſtance; ſhe only wept at quitting ſome dear friends."

"No,"

"No, to be ſure," ſaid the fat woman; "folks as travels in ſuch fine cloaths as them there, can't want nothing from a poor ſailor lad; I dare for to ſay, that Madam's more fitter to help a poor body herſelf."

The lieutenant took no notice of this laſt ſpeech, but addreſſing himſelf to his wife, "That's always your way, Peggy; you always throw cold water on any thing that pleaſes me. I did not imagine the lady wanted money, but there are more ways of ſerving one's neighbour than by giving them money. And ſo, Miſs," ſaid he, turning again to Fanny, "don't be diſcouraged, but if you want any thing in my power, depend upon it, you may always command Harry Newland."

Fanny, grieved to find herſelf thus the object of attention to all her fellow-

travellers, yet much affected with the failor's good will, thanked him more warmly, and endeavoured to talk of fomething elfe. "She had never," fhe faid, "been in London."

"No!" faid an elderly man, who filled up the fifth place in the coach, "and what carries you there now, fo young, fo fair, and fo unprotected?"

Alas! thought Fanny, he little knows how unprotected. "Particular bufinefs," fhe replied. "And what," replied the ftranger, "can you and bufinefs have to do together? Are you going to friends or relations?"

Fanny was piqued at a curiofity fhe thought impertinent, and cooly replying, "She was going to fome friends," turned to the lieutenant, and afked him fome queftions about the great city fhe

was

was about to visit. The lieutenant was but little acquainted with it, and the pert vixen, his wife, eyed her husband and Fanny with an air not totally free from jealousy. Fanny's innocence prevented her at first from noticing this effect of her addressing Mr. Newland; but when, from some sharp speeches of his placid rib, it became evident how her mind was affected, Fanny's gentle heart revolted from the idea of inflicting needless pain on any fellow-creature; and, disgusted with the vulgarity of her right-hand neighbour, and offended by the inquisitiveness of the gentleman, she resolved to be silent.

The lieutenant soon after fell asleep.—The fat woman disdained Mrs. Newland, and Mrs. Newland disdained the fat woman, so that a general silence prevailed.

The gentleman in the corner gazed on Fanny, and evidently wiſhed to engage her in converſation, but obſerving her diſinclination, he forbore to addreſs her, now and then addreſſing ſome trifling ſpeech to the other two female paſſengers.

It began now to grow dark, and the fat woman enquired where the coach ſlept. The gentleman replied, "It does not ſleep at all, but goes on all night, and reaches London at ſeven to-morrow-evening."—"Oh, Lord!" ſaid ſhe, "I cannot pretend for to travel all night long!—Pray what town does it go through?"—"We are to ſtop," ſaid Mrs. Newland, "at B———, where we have ſome relations, and I ſuppoſe we ſhall be there in about half an hour." "Well, then," replied the other, "I ſhall get out there and ſleep, and come on to Lunnon in ſome coach to-morrow."

Fanny

Fanny did not like the proſpect of going on the whole night with no other companion than the inquiſitive gentleman, while he was charmed at the idea of ſo long a tête-à-tête with his lovely fellow-traveller. But while ſhe was deliberating how ſhe could bring it about to ſtop at the ſame place, and he was enjoying in fancy the future happineſs, their cogitations were ſuddenly interrupted by a very ſimple event, the breaking down of the coach.

The lieutenant ſtarted out of his ſleep, and, being of the uppermoſt ſide, began with two or three hearty curſes, to clamber out of the window; and, from the ſituation of the wheels, it being impoſſible to open the door, he looked in at the coach, and cried out, "Come out, my pretty young lady, I can eaſily drag you out of the port-hole." No ſooner ſaid than done; he ſeized Fanny's

arm, and giving a jerk, aſſiſted her eſcape through the window, and leaving his tender helpmate, and the other paſſengers to manage matters for themſelves, he drew her arm under his, and ſwearing they would enter that curſed vehicle no more, began walking away with her towards the town, which was now diſtant about a mile and a half.

Fanny, conſcious that Mrs. Newland would be outrageous, entreated her thoughtleſs friend to ſtop, till their fellow-travellers were ſafe. "But," ſaid he, "promiſe me one thing, that, 'ſpite of all Peggy can ſay, you will go to my Couſin Williams's to-night, and accept of a bed there, and what welcome a hearty ſeaman can give; promiſe me that, and I'll go and ſee for Peggy."—"I will, I will," ſaid ſhe, "only go and help Mrs. Newland." The honeſt ſailor went back to the wreck, as he called

called it, but before he had reached it, met his three companions advancing towards them, all very angry at the accident which expoſed them to ſo long a peregrination on foot, at that time of night.

Mrs. Newland was ſo affronted with her huſband's ſolicitude for Fanny, that ſhe made no anſwer to his enquiries after her ſafety; and the lieutenant, who knew what ſhe meant, turned about to his fair charge, as he called her, and again drawing her arm within his, left the reſt of the party to ſettle matters as they would.

The other gentleman ſtood aloof till Mrs. Newland and the fat woman were arm-in-arm, then, joining Fanny and the lieutenant, entered into converſation with the latter.

Prejudiced as Fanny was againſt him, ſhe could not avoid obſerving that he was much of a gentleman, had good ſenſe, and a fund of entertainment; ſhe involuntarily relaxed of her coolneſs to him, and though ſhe ſaid little, ſpoke always with good humour and civility.

The lieutenant, naturally leaning to the ſubject uppermoſt in his mind, recounted modeſtly enough the little ſtory of his life; "He had ſerved three-and-thirty years," he ſaid, "and had ſeen hard ſervice enough; had more than once ſucceeded to the command, when his captains had loſt their lives in an engagement, but never could get confirmed at home, for want of intereſt."

"I have ſome intereſt at the Admiralty-board," interrupted the ſtranger, "and you ſhall find I have. It is not always

always poſſible to reward merit as it deſerves, particularly where there are ſo many claimants as in the Britiſh fleet; but I will take care."

"God bleſs your honeſt heart," ſaid the ſailor, "for ſpeaking well of the navy. Come, Sir," ſaid he, "accident has brought us all on a level, and I may make a propoſal I ſhould not elſe have ventured to have done; what ſays your Honour to a ſlice of cold roaſt beef at my Couſin Williams's?"—"With all my heart," replied the ſtranger; "for I apprehend we ſhall not get off before morning."—"No, no," cried the lieutenant, "your ſhip won't get under weigh for ſome hours."

Soon after they reached the town, and the fat woman, who had received no invitation, retired to the inn, rather out of humour, while the reſt of the party found a hearty

a hearty welcome at Mr. Williams's. He was a ſubſtantial tradeſman, and had a very notable, good-humoured wife.—The ſupper was plain and plentiful, and they ſat chatting for ſome time in high good-humour, when the ſtage coachman appeared. "The coach," he ſaid, "was repaired, and one lady already ſeated in it."

The gentleman roſe, and after thanking the Williams's, and honeſt Harry Newland, for their kindneſs, promiſing the latter not to forget him at the Admiralty, he advanced to take the hand of Fanny, who, to the infinite ſurpriſe of the lieutenant, propoſed to accompany him.

"Now, now," ſaid he, "you won't go, will you? Didn't you promiſe—" "You are very good," ſaid Fanny, "but I did not think the coach would

be

be ready ſo ſoon."—"Is it quite ſafe?" ſaid the gentleman. "Yes, your Honour; 'tis another coach; and there will be never another ſtage paſs through here to Lunnon theſe two days."

This circumſtance, joined to the intelligence of there being another lady in the coach, and the increaſing good will ſhe felt towards her companion, determined Fanny again to ſet out; and giving her hand to her new friend, ſhe gracefully paid her thanks and compliments to the Williams's, putting her diſengaged hand into that which the honeſt lieutenant held out to her, while he ſhook it heartily, bidding God bleſs her a thouſand times.

When they got into the coach, the lady proved to be a very intimate acquaintance of the gentleman, whoſe name ſhe found

found was Monteith, and the lady's Greville. They were extremely glad to meet, and ſoon agreed in treating Fanny with ſo much kindneſs that the journey paſſed off very agreeably; and without any further accident, they reached London the following evening, not much later than the propoſed hour.

Mrs. Greville would fain have perſuaded Fanny to lodge that night at her houſe, ſaying, "It was late for her to go ſuch a diſtance; as Mr. Wigſtead's houſe was really very remote from the place where the ſtage put up; but Mr. Monteith ſaying he had buſineſs in that quarter, Fanny gladly accepted his offered company, and he handed her into a Hackney-coach, after Mrs. Greville had given her a card with her addreſs, and engaged her to call on her whenever ſhe was at leiſure.

Mr.

Mr. Monteith drew her into a very intereſting converſation, in which he led her to ſay ſo much, that though ſhe was totally unconſcious of having at all diſcloſed her ſituation, he had learnt that ſhe was poor and friendleſs; he ſaw ſhe was beautiful, and as ſuch a ſituation is of all others the moſt open to dangers and difficulties, he determined to exert his friendſhip in her favour, and begged her permiſſion to wait on her occaſionally at Mr. Wigſtead's.

Fanny, whoſe firſt prejudices againſt him were entirely baniſhed, thought him polite, ſenſible, and benevolent, and with pleaſure gave him leave to viſit her; ſhe promiſed herſelf both amuſement and inſtruction from his ſociety, and ſhe expected not much of either from Mrs. Wigſtead.

Mr.

Mr. Monteith was not leſs than ſixty he was not handſome, few men of ſixty are handſome; but he had a ſenſible countenance, and eaſy, polite manner; he was indeed quite a man of the world, he had been an expert pupil of the Cheſterfield ſchool, and could ſo adapt his manners to his company as to be ſure of pleaſing univerſally. He had been irreſiſtible among the women, and he flattered himſelf he was ſo ſtill; elſewhere he had now but little intereſt; and in ſpite of his liberal promiſes to Newland, few men were perhaps leſs able to obtain favour from among men in office.—The general depravity of his character fixed a ſtigma on thoſe he patroniſed, as he ſeldom endeavoured to promote the intereſt of any one who had not ſerved him in ſome of his favourite purſuits. In the inſtance of Harry Newland indeed, he had not the leaſt idea of attempting to ſerve him. He meant nothing

thing more than to impreſs Fanny with an idea of his goodneſs and his power, and he ſucceeded. Of all characters, thoſe whom he leaſt ſought to pleaſe were men of experience and diſcernment; among the young and the inexperienced, among women and ſtrangers, he endeavoured, and generally met with ſucceſs; but he feared the ſcrutinizing eye of judgment, he feared the candid countenance of experienced integrity. But Fanny could not diſcover this character; it lay too deep for her penetration, and ſhe liked him extremely, was much pleaſed with his acquaintance, and ſorry to part from him when the coach ſet her down at Mr. Wigſtead's door.

As the coach ſtopped her emotion returned; ſhe trembled exceedingly, and having thanked her companion with great perturbation, deſcended with ſome difficulty, and having deſired to ſpeak

with

with Mr. Wigſtead alone, ſhe was ſhewn into a ſmall front parlour, and deſired to be ſeated.

Here ſhe retired into herſelf, to enquire by what fault of her own ſhe was thus reduced to ſolicit protection from an entire ſtranger; and wondering what reception ſhe ſhould meet with, when the door opened, and Mr. Wigſtead appeared; but whatever were her embarraſſments, they all vaniſhed at the kind and benevolent manner in which he enquired her buſineſs.

"She brought him a letter," ſhe ſaid, "from Mrs. Moreland, and it would explain her motive for troubling him."

He took the letter, and, while he read it, Fanny examined her new protector. He was a man of fifty, or fifty-five years old; his face and perſon uncommonly

commonly handſome, and his counte-nance was goodneſs and benignity itſelf. His air and dreſs ſpoke the plain, ſenſible merchant, not led away by the beauty of his figure to ape the appearance of the faſhionable world. In ſhort, the more ſhe obſerved him, the more ſhe was pleaſed with him, and the more ſhe felt herſelf inclined to place implicit confidence in him.

When he had read the letter, which very briefly explained the buſineſs, he ſaid, "I cannot enough thank my ſiſter for enabling me to ſerve ſo amiable a lady, and I only wiſh my power was as extenſive as my will. Will you give me leave to preſent you to Mrs. Wigſtead; and ſhould you deem any thing ſingular in the mode of my introduction, I muſt beg you to ſuſpend your judgment till I have an opportunity of explaining my motives. With you," ſaid

he,

he, kindly taking her hand, "I perceive there can never be reſerve; you ſeem formed for friendſhip, and for ſocial confidence; ſo indeed my ſiſter juſtly deſcribes you."

Fanny was overcome; ſhe tried to ſpeak, and Mr. Wigſtead perceiving the effort ineffectual, added, "You will ſee Mr. Moreland; perhaps you may know how to account for my not ſaying you came from my ſiſter." Fanny bowed, and Mr. Wigſtead, perceiving her agitation rather increaſed, entreated her to be ſeated, and defer for a few minutes her introduction to Mrs. Wigſtead. "I cannot hope," ſaid he, "ſo early to acquire any influence over your mind, but I wiſh in future I may prevail on you to baniſh all reſtraint with me, for I already feel I ſhall love you like my daughter. Tell me, lovely girl, will you ſuffer

me

me to be your father? Will you love me as if I were ſo?"

"Ah! Sir," ſaid Fanny, the tears now ſtreaming from her eyes, "Mrs. Moreland told me you were all goodneſs, but I little thought how good! Yes, Sir," added ſhe, "to ſhew you how frank I mean to be with you, I am now going to aſk you, whether it would not be better to take this opportunity of ſettling the mode of my introduction, ſince it would be difficult to go back from our firſt plan, though, if formed in haſte, it might be inconvenient."

"You are perfectly right," ſaid he; "and be then ſo good as to tell me, what would beſt accord with your wiſhes?"

"I know not, Sir, whether Mrs. Moreland has told you, that I have no dependence for my ſupport, but on my own induſtry." "She

"She had ſaid the lady was not rich."

"I am," reſumed Fanny, "wholly unprovided; and I muſt neither be ſlow nor difficult in chooſing a ſituation which will enable me to clothe myſelf; for the peculiar circumſtances in which I left my firſt home, obliged me to ſet out without even a change of linen."

"Good God!" cried Mr. Wigſtead, "what could be thoſe circumſtances?"

"I mean not, Sir," replied Fanny, "to conceal from you any one of the events which have thrown me into the world; this is not the time; my tale would be too long; I have only to ſay, that my abilities are ſmall, but my will ſhall never be deficient."

"Are you," exclaimed he, "qualified for a governeſs?"

"Alas!"

"Alas!" ſaid Fanny, "that is a very arduous taſk; and I neither play, ſpeak French, nor draw."

As for muſic and drawing," reſumed Mr. Wigſtead, "maſters would ſupply that defect, but French is leſs eaſy; yet I cannot abandon this ſcheme, ſince it will enable me to keep you with me, and at leaſt we can endeavour; if we do not ſucceed, great will be my regret."

"Oh," ſaid Fanny, "difficult as is the taſk, to cultivate and accompliſh the mind of youth, what would I not endeavour to ſtay with you! My vigilance ſhould ſupply the want of experience, my attention, of knowledge, and under your eye I ſhould labour with delight, knowing, feeling, as I do, that you are candid and good."

"This is highly flattering to me, my fair ward," replied Mr. Wigſtead, "and

I heartily wiſh your warm hopes may not diſappoint you. You may indeed be ſecure of my affection, for I feel that you have it already. In that light then I may introduce you to my wife, as ſent to me by a correſpondent whom I eſteem, and to whom ſhe knows I have applied."

"I am happy," ſaid Fanny, "that I feel myſelf incapable of wronging ſuch confidence."

"Young lady," ſaid Mr. Wigſtead, "though I have thus warmly given you my intereſt, do not imagine me ſuch an old fool as to be wholly ſwayed by a pretty face, or to be equally ready to love all the fair damſels who might court my kindneſs. Had I not ſeen in your countenance a mental lovelineſs, far beyond mere perſonal beauty,—an expreſſion of goodneſs, which no art can counterfeit;

terfeit, and no features mend or mar,—had I not ſeen that you were a little cabinet of virtues, I ſhould not ſo readily have given you my friendſhip. I am a great phyſiognomiſt, and what will you not believe of that ſcience, when an old man like me, after ſo many years experience, ſtill puts implicit confidence in its predictions."

"It is a ſcience," replied Fanny, "that ſpeaks to the heart, and the candid and feeling muſt ever truſt it."

"Odſo," ſaid he, "my wife will think my ſtay a long one; can you venture to face her?"

"If you pleaſe," ſaid Fanny, riſing; "but is there any company?"

"Only one gentleman, a particular friend of mine, beſides Mr. Moreland and my own family."

Mr. Wigſtead now led her into the drawing-room, and preſented her to his wife, as a lady recommended by his friend, to ſuperintend the education of his daughter; adding, "That as the lady was a ſtranger in London, he deſired his wife would give her a lodging from that time."

"The lady has a name, I ſuppoſe?" ſaid Mrs. Wigſtead.

Mr. Wigſtead and Fanny had been ſo much engaged on other ſubjects that her name had never occurred to either of them, but ſhe immediately replied, "her name was Vincent."

Though ſhe had left Sinclair-lodge in ſo ſudden a manner, and under circumſtances which perhaps would be as well concealed, the idea of changing her name never occurred to her unpractiſed heart;

heart; if it had, ſo great was her love of truth, that it is not probable ſhe would have adopted any other than Vincent. In fact, ſhe was not much known by it, and had ſo few connections to wound by any report of her, and was ſo inſignificant to the world at large, that it mattered little by what name ſhe was called, in the confined circle of her acquaintance.

The name of Vincent, however, ſtruck Mr. Wigſtead; "I had once a friend of that name," ſaid he. "Aye," ſaid Mrs. Wigſtead, "an idle dog, that coſt you I don't know how much money; but you was always for helping every body, ſo that if you had not been lucky you'd ha' come to want yourſelf, and then I wonder who'd ha' helped you!"

"Miſs Vincent!" ſaid a voice which ſtruck Fanny as familiar; "I know both

the name and the lady; but Miſs Fanny has perhaps forgot Mr. Mordaunt."

"No, indeed, Sir," replied Fanny, "I am happy to ſee you; I hope you are well."

Mr. Mordaunt ſaw there was ſome myſtery; he had heard of her ſudden flight from Sinclair-lodge, and he determined to ſay nothing that ſhould interfere with her plan; fearful therefore leſt Mrs. Wigſtead ſhould aſk him any queſtions about her, he ſoon made an opportunity to riſe and take his leave.

Mr. Wigſtead introduced his two ſons and his two daughters to Fanny; and, finding his wife diſpoſed to make enquiries, inſiſted that nothing ſhould be ſaid of buſineſs that evening, and kindly left Fanny at liberty to make her own obſervations.

Mrs. Wigſtead had been a handſome woman, but it was eaſy to ſee ſhe had never been a gentlewoman; the marks of ill-humour were evident on her features; a mean-ſouled pride influenced all her actions, and Fanny could only wonder how Mr. Wigſtead came to chuſe her.

Miſs Wigſtead, the eldeſt of her children, was very plain, much marked with the ſmall-pox, rather deformed, extremely chatty, and inheriting her mother's diſpoſition; totally uninformed, and uneducated, her converſation was coarſe and vulgar, her voice harſh and unpleaſing, and ſhe was wholly devoid of every feminine attraction; ſhe was turned of thirty.

Sophy Wigſtead was not yet twelve; ſhe was pretty, but was ſo much neglected that no other judgment could be

formed of her; neglected indeed only as to her mind, for the ornaments of her perſon were peculiarly ſtudied; ſhe was mama's pet, and was introduced to Fanny as her future pupil.

Mr. Edmund Wigſtead, the eldeſt ſon, was about five-and-twenty; his figure was tall and perfect, his face as beautiful as his father's had been; large dark eyes which ſpoke with energy, a Roman noſe, white teeth, and a manly, good complexion, diſtinguiſhed Mr. Edward Wigſtead; his manners appeared to be reſerved and modeſt, though ſenſible and polite; and Fanny thought him a charming young man.

Matthew, the youngeſt ſon, was about nineteen, ſhort and plain, but ſo odd, ſo very eccentric in his manners, that many people thought him mad; he was the furtheſt in the world from all reſerve,

and,

and, placing himſelf beſide Fanny, took upon himſelf the taſk of entertaining her.

She forgot not to obſerve Mr. Moreland, who was to her, perhaps, the moſt intereſting of the party; ſhe beheld a ſhort, indifferent figure of a man, old enough to be father to her fair friend, with ſuch an affected ſmoothneſs in his manner as highly diſguſted Fanny. She was aſtoniſhed Mrs. Moreland could ever have been deceived; it was eaſy to ſee he was very provoking with his ſteady plauſibility.

Miſs Wigſtead would not enter into converſation with her ſiſter's governeſs, ſhe therefore vented her volubility on Mr. Moreland; Edmund ſeemed ſhy, and Mrs. Wigſtead impenetrable; while her reverend friend endeavoured to make the converſation general, Matthew ſeem-

ed bent on drawing her into a tête-à-tête.

She was amuſed with his oddity, and willingly ſuffered him to divert her mind. Poetry, whether quoted or extempore, ſeemed to be familiar to him, and Mr. Wigſtead could not help ſmiling at the inundation of verſe with which he overwhelmed Fanny; but in ſpite of his uncouth figure and odd manners, there was a good-heartedneſs in him which could not fail to pleaſe in the end; he ſeemed fond of his mother, and idoliſed his father, was the good-humoured butt of his ſiſter's ſtingleſs raillery, and endeavoured to beat ſome ideas into Sophy's head; but his attempts hitherto were in vain, Sophy would not attend to any thing he could ſay.

The obſervations Fanny could make on Mrs. Wigſtead were not much in her favour;

favour; but the more she watched Mr. Wigstead, the more she felt disposed to love him. The evening, though tedious, finished at last, and Fanny was conducted to her room, with an ungracious air, by Miss Wigstead.

Here the agitations of her mind, and the various reflections which naturally arose on the singular changes in her situation, naturally indisposed her for sleeping. The silence of Lady Susan gave her very severe pangs, and she determined to hazard a letter to Bath.—With this intention she at length, after a few hours sleep, arose in the morning about her usual hour, between seven and eight. She went into the drawing-room, but the windows were shut, and the chairs in the disorder of the preceding evening; she then sought the little front parlour where she had been received the night before, and found it already in

order, with implements for writing on a large table. This was precisely what she wished; she seated herself at the table, and took up a pen; at first her heart prompted her to open her whole situation in a long letter to Lady Susan, but again reflecting that if her friend had forsaken her, such a confidence might prejudice herself, without regaining Lady Susan's affections, she resolved to check the overflowings of her tenderness, and wrote only the following short billet.

"*To the Right Hon. Lady Susan de Grey.*

"*Bath.*

"Though I am uncertain whether
" the friendship with which Lady Susan
" de Grey once honoured me be not,
" like all my former blessings, vanished
" into air, yet it formed too much of
" the happiness of my life not to hazard
" a few

"a few lines, to remind her that I yet
"live, and moſt tenderly love her; as
"I am unconſcious of having merited to
"loſe her affection, I am unwilling to
"believe that ſhe has withdrawn it from
"me; and ſhould ſhe wiſh to hear the
"particulars of thoſe untoward circum-
"ſtances which have made ſo great a
"change in my ſituation, a line will
"find me at the underwritten addreſs,
"and will moſt highly oblige, moſt tru-
"ly gratify, her Ladyſhip's

"Sincerly devoted,

"and ever affectionate friend,

"FRANCES VINCENT."

"*At Mr. Wigſtead's,*
"*Laurence Pountney Lane.*"

Not yet had ſhe folded up her note, when the door opened, and her benevolent protector appeared. She roſe at his

his entrance, and, kindly taking her hand, he ſaid, "You are not then uſed to the London hours; my wife and daughters will not appear before eleven; you were fortunate, Miſs Vincent, to find out this room, which being appropriated to my uſe, is always ready early, and which will always be honoured by your company."

"I fear, Sir," ſaid Fanny, "I ſhall intrude on your ſerious buſineſs."

"Not the leaſt in the world; but ſhall I intrude on any project of your's, if I entreat you to take the preſent opportunity of informing me of thoſe circumſtances in which I am ſo truly intereſted, which gave me the pleaſure of your friendſhip?"

Fanny ſaid, "Ah! Sir, if you are at leiſure, it is what I ſhould moſt wiſh to

do, as I am impatient to ſhew you I am not wholly unworthy of your protection, though I can never merit your generous kindneſs."

Mr. Wigſtead led her to a ſeat, and, placing himſelf oppoſite to her, liſtened with unaffected attention to the hiſtory which ſhe related to him, without ſuppreſſing a ſingle incident but thoſe which were unknown to herſelf; ſhe dwelt with energy on the diſappointed hope of hearing from Lady Suſan, and of having found in her a friend beyond the power of chance or fate to deprive her of; and putting her yet unfolded note into his hands, he read it, and, pleaſed with its ſimplicity, aſſured her Lady Suſan had been prevented by accident from writing to her, for that it was impoſſible ſhe ſhould loſe a friend ſhe had once poſſeſſed; he aſſured her that he felt his own attachment to her of a nature

to

to ſecure to her a friend as long as he lived, and that he truſted henceforward ſhe would never ſcruple to apply to him in every exigency; ſpeaking with a warmth of benevolence which brought tears into the eyes of Fanny, who, taught by experience, could now perceive an infinite difference between the falſe, though ardent profeſſions of Sir John Sinclair, and the real, unaffected kindneſs of Mr. Wigſtead.

"Sir," added ſhe, "Mr. Mordaunt, the gentleman I ſaw here laſt night, knew me at Sinclair-lodge; he was cloſe to me the night of that fatal ball, when I heard the wicked aſperſions which robbed me of my ſenſes."

"I expect Mordaunt this morning," ſaid Mr. Wigſtead; "he has one of the beſt of human hearts, and I will let him into our plan by which I have introduced

duced you to my wife, as a lady recommended by my correſpondent, Mr. Trueman, who fortunately lives in the North, and with whom Mr. Mordaunt is acquainted."

"I know ſomething of Mr. Trueman," replied Fanny, "I have ſeen him occaſionally, both at Sinclair-lodge and at Calſhot-houſe."

"That is lucky," ſaid Mr. Wigſtead, "for by this means Mrs. Wigſtead need never ſuſpect the deception I have put upon her; you may think me blameable perhaps, for uſing any reſerve towards my wife; but I conſider this," added he, after a pauſe, "as your ſecret rather than my own; and now," continued he, "let us talk a little of buſineſs; you came away in a great hurry, and probably brought no cloaths with you; ſuppoſe you were to dedicate

this

this morning to making ſuch purchaſes as you want, and permit me to be your banker?" With theſe words he put a fifty pound bank-note into her hands.

"Oh, Sir!" ſaid Fanny.

"I do not mean," continued Mr. Wigſtead, to place you on the depending footing of a hired governeſs; I will, have no ſettled ſalary, you muſt let me do things my own way; I am an odd old fellow, and rather obſtinate. You muſt take this note, though perhaps my wife ſhall be told matters are regularly ſettled. May ſhe not, Miſs Vincent?"

"You muſt do with me as you pleaſe," replied Fanny, with an accent of affection.

"Well then," ſaid he, "aſk me no queſtions, I will ſettle with Mrs. Wigſtead."

"But

"But if she asks any questions?" said Fanny.

"True, true," replied her benevolent protector; "you must tell her then sixty pounds a year, she would not like a larger sum."

"And surely, Sir," said Fanny, "it is amply sufficient for all."

"No, no," interrupted Mr. Wigstead, "I know better young women's calls for money; I am willing to suppose you a nonpareil, but there are a hundred pretty tempting things; my daughter, now, can never resist a dress-cap; my daughter Fanny, perhaps, could never resist a pale-faced mother, and a hungry child."

Fanny took the note, and pressed the hand that held it between both her's,

with

with a graceful action; and Mr. Wigſtead continued; "And what part of your perfections will you impart to Sophy?"

"Writing, ſpelling, and reading, common accounts, and needle-work, ſhe thought ſhe could inſtruct her in; and muſic, drawing, or whatever other accompliſhments might be thought neceſſary, ſhe would ſee the young lady attended to; her vigilance ſhould ſupply the place of experience, and her wiſh to pleaſe muſt atone for the defects of her ability."

"All that is truly uſeful, all that forms the mind and manners, I ſee plainly you are qualified to teach, and if, in compliance with a fooliſh faſhion, I give my daughter a drawing and a muſic-maſter, it is not that I ſhall wiſh her to

be

be more accompliſhed than Miſs Vincent."

"Aha! *bon jour, bon jour*, good folks" cried Matthew, who, at that inſtant, opened the door. "What a charming tête-à-tête; may I come in? but I ſee I may in Miſs Vincent's ſmiling face, and ſo," added he,

"The fair Aurora turns a willing ear,
Devoid of doubt, devoid of fear,
To hoary-headed Titan's pleaſing tales,
So age o'er youth and love prevails.

For I dare ſay Miſs Vincent would not have granted me ſuch a tête-à-tête. Would you?"

"May be not," ſaid ſhe ſmiling.

"Well," reſumed the mad-cap boy, "but will you go with me this morning to Kenſington-gardens, and allow me in

thoſe ſoft ſhades to breathe in your ear all that my heart dictates?"

"No, indeed;" ſaid Fanny, "I can allow no ſuch thing."

"And dwells ſuch ſcornful lightning in thoſe eyes,
Whoſe milder beams might make the world their prize?
And dwells ſuch anger in that downy breaſt,
Where Cupid's doves would ſeek their ſofteſt neſt?

Oh, fye! Miſs Vincent; nothiing is ſo unbecoming to a pretty face as an angry refuſal."

"Go, you mad-headed boy, go and ſee if your mother and ſiſters are down."

Away flew Matthew.

"There's a lad," ſaid Mr. Wigſtead, with a hundred good qualities; he is gentle, generous, and affectionate; he has

has a good head, and a good heart, but he wants pruning, he wants the ſociety of elegant women to poliſh his manners; I believe I ſhall put him under your tuition. Here, Matthew," (as he then entered) "Miſs Vincent will be ſo good as to undertake your education."

"Oh dear, Miſs Vincent," ſaid he, dropping on one knee, "pray do, and indeed,

My lovely tut'reſs ſtill ſhall find
Her pupil bears a willing mind;
Pleas'd with his ſweet, his dear ſubjection,
He'll kiſs the hand that gives correction."

Mr. Wigſtead enquired if the ladies were down; he heard they were, and they now attended the breakfaſt-table.

At breakfaſt Fanny's buſineſs and affairs were diſcuſſed and ſettled, with an

air

air very different from Mr. Wigſtead's delicacy and generoſity. Mrs. Wigſtead was evidently diſpleaſed that Fanny could not teach muſic and drawing, and particularly that ſhe could not ſpeak French; but at laſt all points were ſettled, and ſhe was inſtalled governeſs to Miſs Sophia Wigſtead.

From that moment Miſs Sophy determined to bend her little wits to circumvent and outwit her governeſs, to plague and vex her in every poſſible inſtance; while Fanny reſolved to endeavour to gain the child's affection, and to bring her to what ſhe wiſhed, by gentle and endearing methods.

Mr. Wigſtead deſired the young people would accompany Miſs Vincent to the different ſhops in his coach, which was readily agreed to, and they retired to get ready for their expedition.

When

When the ſhopping buſineſs was over, the two young men propoſed a ſaunter in the park, which was complied with by Miſs Wigſtead with great pleaſure. All that they ſaw amuſed and delighted Fanny, who, unaccuſtomed to London, beheld with a pleaſing ſurprize, the opulence, the variety, the elegance, with which it abounds; as they had yet an hour on their hands, before it was neceſſary to return to dreſs for dinner, they looked in at two or three places, to enjoy their firſt effect on her inexperienced eye, which Matthew declared was a high gratification.

But what aſtoniſhed Fanny more than the magnificence of London, and pleaſed her infinitely leſs, was to ſee that Edmund Wigſtead was quite a different being, when abſent from the reſtraint of his father's preſence. Conceited, affected, gallant, and coxcomical, ſhe thought

him this morning as unpleaſing as ſhe had found him agreeable the preceding evening; and ſhe ſaw with pain, that his unpleaſant qualities were only checked under an aſſumed reſerve; with ladies he was confident, equivocal, and preſuming; depending on his beauty for his excuſe, he dared to hazard any thing, and rolled his large black eyes with the moſt decided impudence, or fixed them in the moſt embarraſſing ſtare.

Fanny would have deſpiſed the young coxcomb as he merited, had he not pointedly directed his aſſiduities to her, and peſtered her with all the artillery of vows, compliments, and coxcombry.

At length they returned home, where Fanny found a card from Mr. Monteith, and ſoon after ſhe reached her own room, Mr. Wigſtead ſent to requeſt her company in his parlour. Here ſhe

ſaw

ſaw Mr. Mordaunt in company with her protector; he roſe at her entrance, and ſaid, "I have been learning, Miſs Vincent, how to conduct myſelf towards you, ſo as to ſpoil no meaſures already concerted; the little I know of your hiſtory, aſſured me you meant not to divulge the whole of it here, and the communication Mr. Wigſtead has been ſo good as to make to me, while it exalts you in my eſteem, ſecures me your friend for ever."

Fanny thanked him for his profeſſions of kindneſs, and, at her requeſt, he informed her of what had paſſed at the lodge, ſince her departure. Sir John had made very ſtrict ſearch all over the neighbourhood, and when it proved to be ineffectual, he taxed Colonel Gordon with being an acceſſary in Fanny's flight, which produced a quarrel and a

challenge; they fought, and Sir John was wounded, not dangerouſly, but ſo as to confine him for ſome time to his room. Miſs Sinclair had run away to Scotland with Mr. Euſtace, and Miſs Euſtace had married Colonel Gordon. Sir John was miſerable at his wound, which prevented his following his fugitive daughter, or ſeeking (which intereſted him ſtill more) the fair prize which had eſcaped his clutches. The Calſhot family were ſtill at Bath, from whence he underſtood they meant, as ſoon as Lord Calſhot recovered a little ſtrength, to return immediately to London, without hazarding the long journey into the North.

Fanny was much obliged to him for his intelligence, and happy to be ſecure for ſome time from any ſearch, on the part of Sir John Sinclair.

A good

A good deal of company came in the evening, which was ſpent in the tedious ceremony of cards, during which Matthew, who made no ſecret of his devotion to Miſs Vincent, continued to ſeat himſelf next to her, and keep her engaged in converſation the whole evening, while Edmund kept aloof, and reſumed his ſhy reſerve, and his pleaſing manners.

When the company were gone, Miſs Wigſtead exerted her eloquence in running them all down; no individual of the party, according to her, had either elegance, ſenſe, or beauty; and though herſelf ſo eminently deficient in all three, ſhe ceaſed not her larum, till Matthew, with peculiar archneſs cried out,

"So Momus, in th' Olympian court,
Made all the Gods by turns his ſport;
Therſites, ſo, the Grecian jeſter,
Mocked all from Ajax up to Neſtor,

Unmindful of the general laugh,
Till filenc'd by Ulyſſes' ſtaff."

" A very fair hit, Matthew," cried the elder Mr. Wigſtead, " your ſiſter laid herſelf very open to it."

" I'm ſure I don't know what I had done," replied Miſs Wigſtead ſharply, " nor I don't know what Matthew means by his verſes that he's always ſo free of, I know none of the people they're about."

" No, I'll anſwer for thee," returned the father; " but come, Mat, haſt nothing to ſay to Miſs Vincent? is not ſhe a good ſubject for poetry?"

" So good, Sir, that my talents," replied Matthew " are wholly unequal to it; I can only admire,

While

While ſhe, the faireſt of the croud,
Is ever candid, never loud;
Still elegant, judicious ſtill,
Moulds all opinions to her will;
And by her ſweetneſs and her merit,
Leads captive every willing ſpirit."

"What rhodomontade ſtuff!" cried Mrs. Wigſtead. "Truly, Mat, thou hadſt better give attention to the compting-houſe, than to ſuch nonſenſical flouriſhes."

"But Matthew," reſumed Mr. Wigſtead, "loves the figures of poetry better than thoſe of arithmetic; both, in due time, my lad, are very commendable."

Two or three days more elapſed, in which Fanny found no reaſon to alter her opinion of the family. Mrs. Wigſtead was coarſe in her manners, and did not improve upon acquaintance; and

from her friend, Mr. Mordaunt, she learnt, that she had been the daughter of the merchant in whose compting-house Mr. Wigstead had been placed when a boy; that charmed with his person, which was very handsome, Miss had invariably refused all suitors, and at last, finding the irresistible young man would not declare himself, she fell into a low way, from which she confessed to her mother, nothing would raise her but marrying Mr. Wigstead; the fond parents who adored their lovely daughter, (though uninstructed themselves, they had never thought of cultivating her mind) readily consented, and broke the affair to Mr. Wigstead; he had no engagement, but was far from returning the tenderness of his beautiful mistress; he held off for some time, till at length the sight of her melancholy and ill health, her pale cheeks and emaciated form, conquered him, and he married the daughter, and was

made

made partner with the father; he ſoon ſucceeded to the whole buſineſs, and if money can ſatisfy his heart, he has it in abundance."

On the fourth day of her abode in Laurence Pountney Lane, Mr. Monteith paid her another viſit; this gentleman, who ſaw her dependent ſituation, formed a project for her advancement, which he thought it impoſſible ſhe could refuſe. Though for ſome private reaſons he had ceaſed to devote his own perſon to the ſervice of the fair, he had a noble friend, in whoſe favour he ſtill continued to exerciſe his influence over their hearts. To this lord, ſuch a prize as Fanny would, he knew, be invaluable; he determined then to lay cloſe ſiege to her, and, as he knew ſomething of the Wigſteads, he thought it would be eaſy to render Mrs. Wigſtead odious to her, and to make her diſſatisfied with her ſitu-

ſituation; if once he could accompliſh that, he concluded it would be eaſy to induce her to place herſelf under the protection of his noble friend.

Fanny received him with pleaſure, and ſpent an hour very agreeably in his company; he artfully tried to get at her opinion of the Wigſteads; but ſhe forbore to ſay any thing againſt the family to whom ſhe owed ſo much, though ſhe was not ſilent when Mr. Wigſtead was mentioned; ſhe declared him the beſt of human beings, and ſpoke in his praiſe ſo warmly, that Monteith ſaw he muſt not hazard any thing ſtrong at firſt; he knew, however, very little of Mr. Wigſtead, he would ſeek to know him better, and would form his opinion by Miſs Vincent's; he was ſure, whatever he had thought, her judgment was right; it muſt be unerring; but Edmund— "what thought ſhe of Edmund?"

"She

"She could not tell; she ſaw leſs of Edmund than of the reſt of the family."

"Then, Miſs Vincent, let me tell you, Edmund is not a man of worth; brought up to a liberal profeſſion, Edmund Wigſtead courts the low, pettifogging attornies, inſtead of ſeeking to raiſe himſelf by a connection with the more eminent on the bench; he is diſſolute and rapacious, and is incapable of one liberal ſentiment; he is certainly handſome, yet, I think, were I a woman—"

"If you mean, Sir," ſaid Miſs Vincent, "to guard my heart againſt Mr. Edmund Wigſtead, let me aſſure you it is in no danger."

"Yet a fine perſon, ſometimes—"

"Oh,

"Oh, it would go a very little way with me; but I fancy Edmund would hardly ſeek to make a conqueſt of me, and I truſt I ſhould not become an eaſy prey to one who cared not for me."

"You muſt forgive my impertinence," ſaid Mr. Monteith, "but I am warmly intereſted for you, and I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you—"

"Oh, Sir, do not mention it; I thank you for your attention," ſaid Fanny, coldly, as he roſe to go.

Fanny's original pique at Monteith's impertinence again returned, and as ſhe had no peculiar motive to diſſemble her diſlike, ſhe perhaps ſuffered it to appear too plainly, for Mr. Monteith took a very cool leave of her, and ſhe did not invite him to repeat his viſit. He was

not

not however to be ſo eaſily diſcouraged; he determined to perſevere, though perhaps not immediately, but to wait till Mrs. Wigſtead had had time to render Fanny's reſidence there uncomfortable, which he had no doubt would happen in time, and which would pave the way for his propoſals.

Soon after he was gone, Matthew Wigſtead rapped at the door, and, on being admitted, ſaid, "I bring my paſſport in my hand, Miſs Vincent; I would ſuffer no one to convey this to you but myſelf;" he then, on his knee, preſented her a letter, but would not deliver it till ſhe permitted him to kiſs her hand; her impatience would not ſuffer her to argue the point with him, and having given her the letter, he roſe and left the room.

It was from Lady Suſan.

Fanny

Fanny broke the ſeal with eagerneſs, then pauſed a moment ere ſhe unfolded the paper, but ſeeing it quite full, drew a happy augury from that circumſtance, and inſtantly opening it, read as follows:

"*To* MISS VINCENT.

"*Bath,*

"Long indeed, my deareſt Fanny, "had I been expecting to receive from "you ſome anſwer to the three letters "I wrote to you at Sinclair-lodge; but "your little billet, this inſtant received, "proves there has been ſome villainy "at the bottom of this affair. Some, "do I ſay! Oh, what elſe could have "driven my ſweet friend from her earli-"eſt home, to ſeek refuge from ſtrang-"ers? What elſe could have induced "her to commit her lovely perſon, and

"inexperi-

" inexperienced youth, forlorn and un-
" protected, to the unpitying world?—
" Yet ſure, wherever you are, you muſt
" meet with friends, and I long impa-
" tiently for the communication you
" promiſe me.

" When my father's ſudden attack
" called me ſo inſtantly from you, my
" heart was full of fears for the dangers
" I ſaw around you; for the ſnares I
" fancied were ſpread for you; alas!
" has not the event realiſed my fears?

" I wrote from Bath, to alarm your
" innocent heart; reluctantly I wrote,
" for I knew the ſhock it would give to
" your peace; yet I could not bear to
" leave you unwarned of the blow
" which threatened you. To this let-
" ter I received no anſwer. Again I
" wrote.—Again I looked in vain for a
" letter from you; I would not believe

" that

" that you ſcorned either my love or
" my caution; but I trembled leſt theſe
" had been too late, and left your in-
" nocence had been ſurprized un-
" awares, and my ſweet friend had
" loſt her peace for ever. Again, and
" in fearful agony I wrote, conjuring
" you, if all my fears were dreadfully
" realized, to withdraw yourſelf inſtant-
" ly from the fatal ſcene, and truſt to
" my friendſhip, and Mr. Cecil's, for
" an aſylum.

" Your ſilence now almoſt diſtracted
" me; a thouſand horrible ideas croud-
" ed into my mind. I will not repeat
" them to you;—I cannot bear to dwell
" on them, even now I know you are
" ſafe. I had juſt perſuaded my ge-
" nerous Cecil, who is warmly your
" friend, to return into the North, to
" gain ſome intelligence of you, when
" your welcome billet arrived, and ſet
" my ſoul at reſt.

" I was ſure it was impoſſible you
" could ever have deſerved to loſe my
" love,—and oh, Fanny, you ſhould
" have been ſure I never could have
" withdrawn it from you! but, my
" ſweet girl, haſten and ſend me your
" narrative, you cannot imagine how
" anxious I am to receive it. How my
" letters never reached your hands, I
" cannot develope, unleſs Sir John had
" his ſuſpicions, and with-held them
" from you.

" You will wiſh, I know, to hear
" ſome account of our family; my fa-
" ther mends, but very ſlowly, and I
" believe it will be yet five or ſix weeks
" ere we ſhall be able to come to Lon-
" don; though it will then be early,
" we ſhall not return into the North, ſo
" that I ſhall at leaſt be near my charm-
" ing friend.

" Mr.

" Mr. Cecil is the ſame good, gene-
" rous being he ever was; you are no
" ſtranger to my ſentiments of him,
" and why indeed ſhould I wiſh to con-
" ceal an attachment founded in reaſon
" and virtue? You will be ſorry to
" hear that particular buſineſs calls him
" hence to the Weſt Indies, though
" this circumſtance may be eventually
" lucky, ſince he is going to take poſ-
" ſeſſion of an eſtate, bequeathed him
" by a diſtant relation, and, on his re-
" turn, he is again to endeavour to gain
" Lord Calſhot's conſent.

" Matters are in great forwardneſs
" for another wedding in our family,
" which will be celebrated as ſoon as
" we come town, between my ſiſter
" and Lord Haughtonbury. My ad-
" vice, you know, my deareſt Fanny,
" would weigh but very little in that
" quarter, or I believe I ſhould have

" ſpoken

" ſpoken againſt his Lordſhip; but my
" ſiſter is inclined to think well of him;
" his eſtate is ſplendid, and his rank
" equal to the wiſhes of Lord and
" Lady Calſhot.

" My brother is ſtill the ſame amiable
" character he has ever been; his in-
" deed is a mind not ſubject to change;
" did he know I was writing to you, he
" would charge me with a thouſand
" good wiſhes and kind remembrances;
" and here he comes at this very inſtant.
" Is it not true, de Grey? have you
" not a thouſand kind things to ſay to
" our Fanny?" His amaze is extreme;
" he is devouring your billet, rather
" than reading it.— " Thank God,"
" he cries, " then ſhe is ſafe. Tell her,
" Suſan, I fervently rejoice in her eſcape.
" I had heard ſome circumſtances which
" I would not acquaint even you with,
" for fear of alarming you; but I had

talked

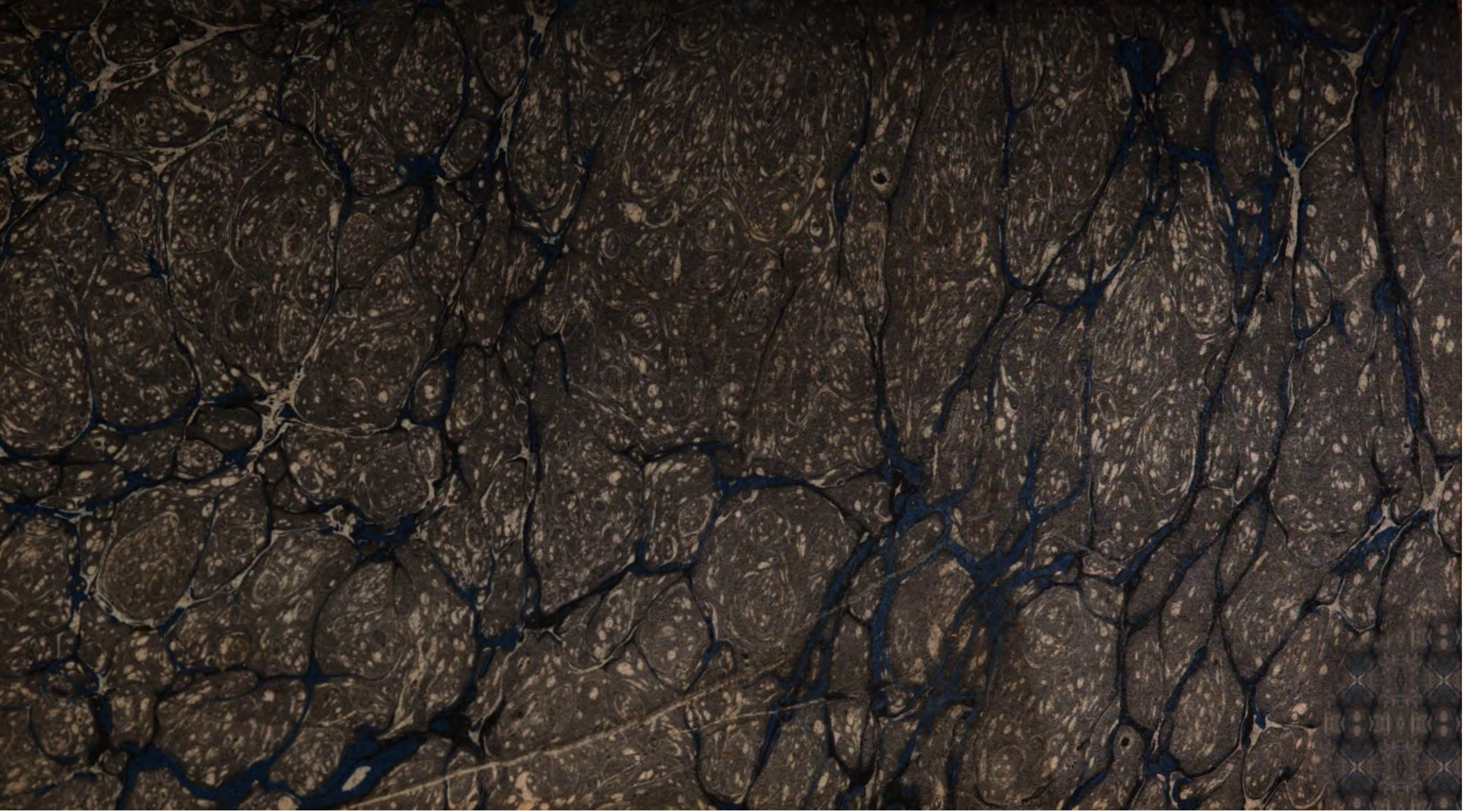
" talked them over with Cecil. But ſhe
" is eſcaped. She is ſafe."—— Thus
" he runs on, without any particular
" meſſage. Perhaps my Fanny can
" read his good wiſhes in his rejoicings.
" He is truly ſo much intereſted in your
" welfare, that you muſt not call it a
" breach of confidence, if I inform him
" of the leading events that have hap-
" pened to you ſince our ſeparation.
" He has made me promiſe, and Fan-
" ny will not force me to break my
" word.

" Adieu, my amiable, my dear friend;
" believe that no time nor chance can
" ever leſſen the ſincere affection I feel
" for you. Continue to love me, and
" ever depend on the friendſhip of,

" Your truly affectionate

" SUSAN DE GREY."

END OF VOL. I.



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